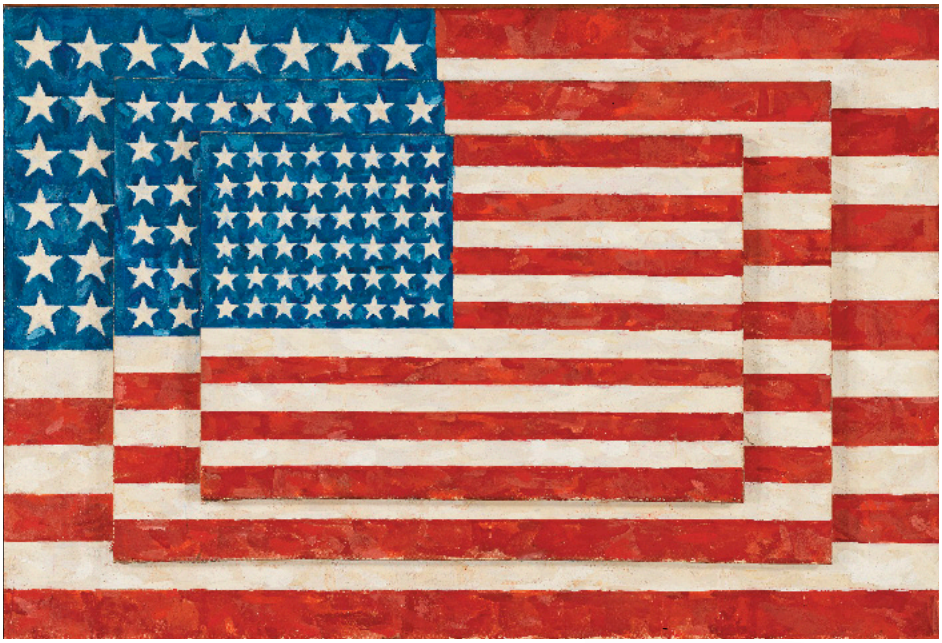
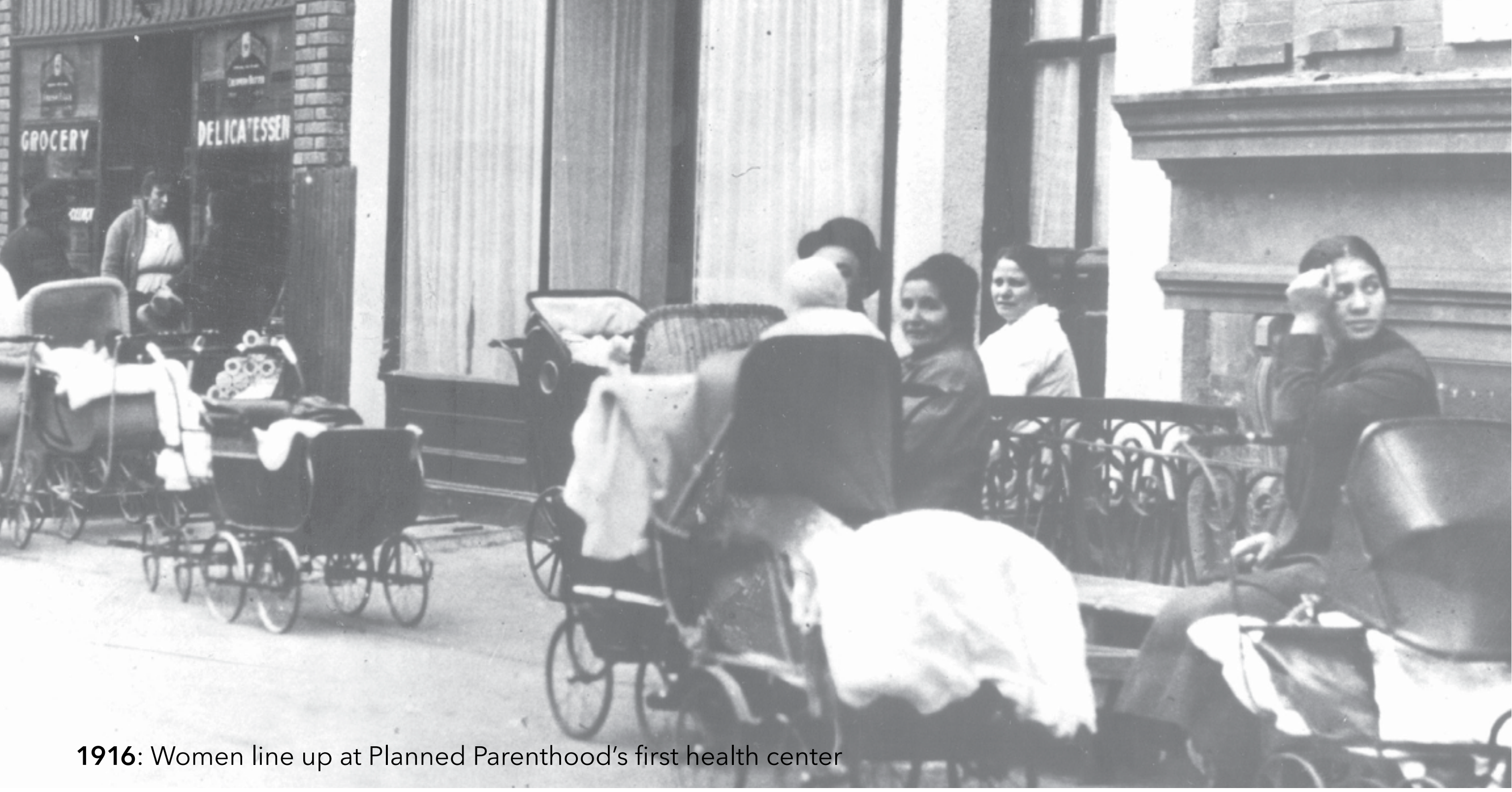
THE Nation.

APRIL 2015

150TH ANNIVERSARY



James Agee
Eqbal Ahmad
Ai Weiwei
Hannah Arendt
James Baldwin
Amiri Baraka
Moustafa Bayoumi
Wendell Berry
Kai Bird
Margaret Bourke-White
Steve Brodner
Noam Chomsky
Alexander Cockburn
Sue Coe
Stephen F. Cohen
Arthur C. Danto
Bill de Blasio
E.L. Doctorow
Ariel Dorfman
Eric Drooker
W.E.B. Du Bois
Barbara Ehrenreich
Albert Einstein
Frances FitzGerald
Eric Foner
Mark Gevisser
Paula J. Giddings
Allen Ginsberg
Milton Glaser
Emma Goldman
Vivian Gornick
Clement Greenberg
William Gropper
Robert Grossman
D.D. Guttenplan
Melissa Harris-Perry
Christopher Hayes
Christopher Hitchens
Langston Hughes
Molly Ivins
Henry James
Martin Luther King Jr.
Freda Kirchwey
Stuart Klawans
Naomi Klein
Andrew Kopkind
Tony Kushner
John Leonard
Penny Lernoux
David Levine
Maria Margaronis
Michael Massing
Carey McWilliams
H.L. Mencken
Edward Miliband
Arthur Miller
Jessica Mitford
Marianne Moore
Michael Moore
Toni Morrison
Ralph Nader
Victor Navasky
Katha Pollitt
Adolph Reed Jr.
Marilynne Robinson
Edward W. Said
Kshama Sawant
Jeremy Scahill
Jonathan Schell
Ben Shahn
Daniel Singer
Mychal Denzel Smith
Rebecca Solnit
Edward Sorel
Art Spiegelman
John Steinbeck
I.F. Stone
Hunter S. Thompson
Tom Tomorrow
Touré
Calvin Trillin
Dalton Trumbo
Katrina vanden Heuvel
Gore Vidal
Alice Walker
Carrie Mae Weems
Edmund White
Amy Wilentz
Patricia J. Williams
William Appleman Williams
Ellen Willis
JoAnn Wypijewski
Howard Zinn


GROCERY
DELICATESSEN

1916: Women line up at Planned Parenthood's first health center

Making history, together

Planned Parenthood congratulates our friends and partners at The Nation for 150 years of groundbreaking journalism

BIRTH CONTROL
NOT MY BOSS'S BUSINESS
HOBBY LOBBY: THROW GLITTER NOT SHADE
ACCESS TO BIRTH CONTROL
SALUD DIGNIDAD JUSTICIA
NO CO FOR CORPORA
WE STAND FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH TODAY ALWAYS TOMORROW
SALUD DIGNIDAD JUSTICIA
NATIONAL LATINA INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

2014: Supporters rally to protect women's health

Planned Parenthood®
Care. No matter what.

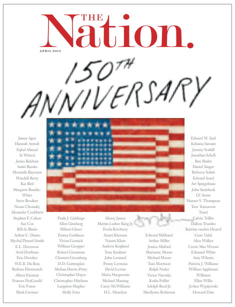
The Nation.
since 1865

There Are Always Alternatives

KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL

Freda Kirchwey, the first woman editor of *The Nation*, said, “Anniversaries should be approached without awe.” That was seventy-five years ago. *The Nation*’s longevity over 150 years is a remarkable feat—especially in our fast-changing media landscape. ¶ For the magazine to survive and thrive for another century and a half, however, *The Nation* will have to adapt. Indeed, sixty years ago, Kirchwey’s successor Carey McWilliams declared: “*The Nation* must change, as it has changed in the past, if only to encompass certain harsh realities of present-day American journalism.” *The Nation*, he added, has a “special responsibility to report the significant happening that might otherwise go unreported, to air unpopular views and controversial issues.” When every day seems to bring the demise of another iconic voice, and the news is increasingly dominated by sound bites and gossip, *The Nation*’s commitment to covering the issues that matter, giving space to unconventional news and views, takes on even greater urgency.

This special issue, which I have co-edited with my valued colleague D.D. Guttenplan, our London correspondent, weaves together voices from *The Nation*’s rich history with contributors writing about the current cultural and political moment. In three sections of archival excerpts, each representing five decades of the magazine’s history, we reprint some of the best that was thought and said in our pages—much of it inspiring and eerily prescient, some of it shocking, but all of it fascinating to read. We have also included a few selections that turned out to be less than prophetic. As we look toward the future, the mistakes of our past remind us that taking a principled stand often requires running intellectual risks.



Interspersed with the archival excerpts are three sections of newly commissioned material. In the first, “*The Nation* and the Nation,” writers explore the magazine’s surprising influence on everything from poetry to feminism, radicalism to right-wing conservatism, Cuba to coverage of the arts. In “Fierce Urgencies,” contributors consider topics as pressing today as at any time in the last 150 years, including the politics of fear, from anticommunism in the 1950s to Islamophobia today, and the relationship of the left to power—in movements, in electoral politics and in government. Finally, in “Radical Futures,” *Nation* writers map out new ideas and strategies for radicals, progressives and liberals seeking to expand the terms of our public discussion and look beyond the present moment. Throughout these sections, we republish a selection of the most dazzling poetry and art that has appeared in our pages, as well as newly commissioned work by some of the most exciting artists working today.

Reading through the issue, I was struck by the many continuing conversations among *Nation* contributors, the deep correspondences between past and present ideas about what it would mean to imagine a radically better future. But then *The Nation*’s founding prospectus, 150 years ago, called for “a more equal distribution of the fruits of progress and civilization.” That still seems like a good idea.

This momentous anniversary will also be marked by Guttenplan’s spirited new book, *The Nation: A Biography*. Excerpts here lend historical context to the issue, and selections from the transcript of a recent *Nation*-sponsored conversation at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture point the way toward a revival of the abolitionist project that launched this magazine, exploring what it might mean to actually finish the work of Reconstruction.

This year also marks my twentieth anniversary as editor of *The Nation*. I came to the magazine as an intern at the outset of the Reagan years, following in the footsteps of remarkable editors like Carey McWilliams, Victor Navasky and, of course, Freda Kirchwey—an early feminist, a fiercely principled and early opponent of fascism, a determined foe of McCarthyism and an inspiration to me—who led the magazine from 1937 to 1955. My two decades as editor have coincided with turbulent times, both for *The Nation* and the nation: from the Clinton impeachment to the Supreme Court’s selection of George

W. Bush in 2000; from September 11 and the invasion of Iraq to the revelations of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere. Then there was Hurricane Katrina, America's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and, today, the risk of a new Cold War with Russia.

One of my most important responsibilities has been guiding *The Nation* through periods of strife, from the grim days after 9/11 to our early and unwavering opposition to the Iraq War. Criticizing government policy in wartime is not a path to popularity. But I drew on the strength of my predecessors, who were also willing to take unpopular stances, animated by *The Nation*'s enduring principles. There have been electrifying moments, too: the election of Barack Obama, the first black president in our history; and the proliferation of social movements at home and abroad, including Occupy Wall Street and #BlackLivesMatter. I have never—yet—experienced a week like the one described in the very first line of *The Nation*'s first issue: "The week has been singularly barren of exciting events."

Change is inevitable, but the one constant in *The Nation*'s history has been a faith in what can happen if you tell people the truth.

Instead, the decades have only increased my respect for this extraordinary institution and the debates, both civil and uncivil, that fill its pages—and now its web pages. Our columnists and contributors argue and debate among themselves on matters of principle, politics, policy and even morality.

Through it all, I have my own passions and fixed points on my political compass. These include an abiding belief in inside/outside politics—that against entrenched injustice, it takes a movement of courageous citizens sick and tired of being sick and tired, but also principled political leaders with the will and the skill to push change through a system designed to impede it. They also include the conviction that only an organized people can avert the theft of our country by oligarchical money and dismantle the rigged system that cheats too many working and poor people; that democracy without women is not democracy; and that we'd be wise to get our own house in order before remaking the globe. And while we're at it, isn't it high time to craft a politics of hope, not of fear? Of true security, not perpetual war?

Above all, I see myself as the steward of an idea that has sustained *The Nation* since its founding: the idea that there are always alternatives—in history, in politics, in life—that would make our country and the world a more humane, just and secure place.

Take racial justice—a commitment that formed part of *The Nation*'s founding purpose in 1865. In this issue, you can read James Baldwin's eloquent, outraged report from what in 1966 he called "occupied territory"—meaning not the Middle East, but Harlem. His essay has particular echoes in our own time, but these same parallels are apparent in our coverage of feminism, of corporate power, of anti-imperialism and many other topics. Throughout its history, *The Nation* has challenged the conventional wisdom and narrow consensus of our public debate. We have repeatedly championed proposals originally labeled heretical, only to see them accepted as common sense a generation later. For instance, *The Nation* argued that reaching a negotiated solution in Vietnam was a better strategy than military intervention—in 1954!

That independence has been one of the keys to *The Nation*'s longevity—and has become ever more important in an age when the need for dissident and rebellious voices is ever more urgent. Our commitment to providing a venue for passionate arguments between liberals and radicals has instilled in both a deep sense of ownership in *The Nation*—and a stake in its continued survival. Finally, *The Nation*'s readiness to fight and refight the same battles—a persistence that permeates every page of this issue—has inspired a rare and precious devotion among our readers. As the great Carey McWilliams once said, "It is precisely because *The Nation*'s backers cared more about what it stood for than what it earned that the magazine has survived."

YET, WHILE I AM DELIGHTED TO HONOR the magazine's illustrious history, I am determined to bring *The Nation* into the twenty-first century. I have worked to promote younger writers, appeal to young readers, and engage with the issues and social movements that inspire the passions of young people. Our country and the world are undergoing extraordinary tectonic shifts. When it comes to citizen control of government or corporate power, we're in the fight of our lives. These times demand that *The Nation* be ever bolder, willing to unshackle our imaginations and ready to think anew. The advent of digital publishing and social media offers a historic opportunity to reach vastly larger audiences and have a greater impact in the world.

But it also represents a challenge. Storytelling and opinion are no longer confined to the orderly columns of print: videos, infographics, photo essays and real-time reporting are now all common journalistic tools. At *The Nation*, we're committing to embracing this change. One measure of our commitment: acclaimed director Barbara Kopple's rollicking documentary *Hot Type: 150 Years of The Nation* will be a key part of our anniversary celebrations around the country.

On July 6, 2015—exactly 150 years from the debut of *The Nation*'s first issue—we'll launch a new website, redesigned from top to bottom. The reimagined TheNation.com is elegant, nimble and innovative, and I believe it will ensure that *The Nation* is more vital than ever for the next generation of readers. At the same time, print remains an anchor, an essential part of *The Nation*'s identity. As breaking news continues to migrate online, the print edition retains a distinct mission, offering considered comment and a more curated opportunity to focus our readers' attention on matters of critical interest.

Change is inevitable, but the one constant in *The Nation*'s history has been faith—not in political parties or policies, but in what can happen when you tell people the truth. Our very first issue described "the conflict of the ages, the great strife between the few and the many, between privilege and equality, between law and power, between opinion and the sword." This anniversary issue is a record of the last 150 years of that conflict—and as long as *The Nation* is around, that fight will go on. **150th**

Lannan
2014 AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

CULTURAL FREEDOM
Awards & Fellowships

Bryan Stevenson
Cultural Freedom Prize for his work on behalf of Alabama's Equal Justice Initiative

Alexis Bonogofsky
Fellowship for her efforts to build coalitions between indigenous groups and ranchers to fight coal development in southeastern Montana

David Zirin
Fellowship for his social critique through the lens of sports writing on football star Jim Brown

Max Blumenthal
An Especially Notable Book Award for *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel* (Nation Books, 2013)

Lannan Foundation is a family foundation dedicated to cultural freedom, diversity, and creativity through projects that support exceptional contemporary artists and writers, as well as inspired Native activists in rural indigenous communities. The Foundation recognizes the profound and often unquantifiable value of the creative process and is willing to take risks and make substantial investments in ambitious and experimental thinking. Understanding that globalization threatens all cultures and ecosystems, the Foundation is particularly interested in projects that encourage freedom of inquiry, imagination and expression.

www.lannan.org

LITERARY
Awards & Fellowships

Steve Erickson
Lifetime Achievement Award for Fiction

Joseph Stroud
Lifetime Achievement Award for Poetry

Claudia Rankine
Award for Poetry

Mitchell S. Jackson
Fellowship for Fiction

Adrian Matejka
Fellowship for Poetry

Jamaal May
Fellowship for Poetry

Jill McDonough
Fellowship for Poetry

RECONSTRUCTION
Gilded Age
Mexico (2)
PANAMA
HAITI
Cuba
NICARAGUA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
WOODROW WILSON'S LATIN AMERICAN WARS
JIM CROW
WHITE LANE
COLORED
STRIKE
SOUP
WW2

THE NATION
150 YEARS

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The Nation.
since 1865

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ANTI-McCARTHY
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Watergate
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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Anti-McCarthy
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Robbie CIA
Intelligence Agency
OUT NOW
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Jasper Johns (b. 1930). *Three Flags*, 1958. Encaustic on canvas, 30 5/8 x 45 1/2 x 4 5/8 in. (77 .8 x 115.6 x 11.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchased with funds from the Gilman Foundation Inc., the Lauder Foundation, A. Alfred Taubman, Laura Lee Whittier Woods, Howard Lipman and Ed Downe, in honor of the museum's fiftieth anniversary 80.32 Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, NY

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April 6, 2015

The digital version of this issue is available to all subscribers March 23 at TheNation.com.

STEVE BRODNER

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At Domini, we recognize that the world we live in tomorrow will be shaped by the investment decisions we make today. We believe that companies working to address the long-term sustainability challenges of their industries make better long-term investments—for the environment, for society and for their shareholders.

We believe that all investments have social and environmental implications. We apply social, environmental and governance standards to all of our investments, believing they help identify opportunities to provide competitive returns to our fund shareholders while also helping to create a more just and sustainable economic system.

Our approach enables us to capture sources of risk and opportunity that may be overlooked by conventional financial analysis. Social and environmental indicators also provide us with insight into the quality of corporate management teams, a key component of future success.

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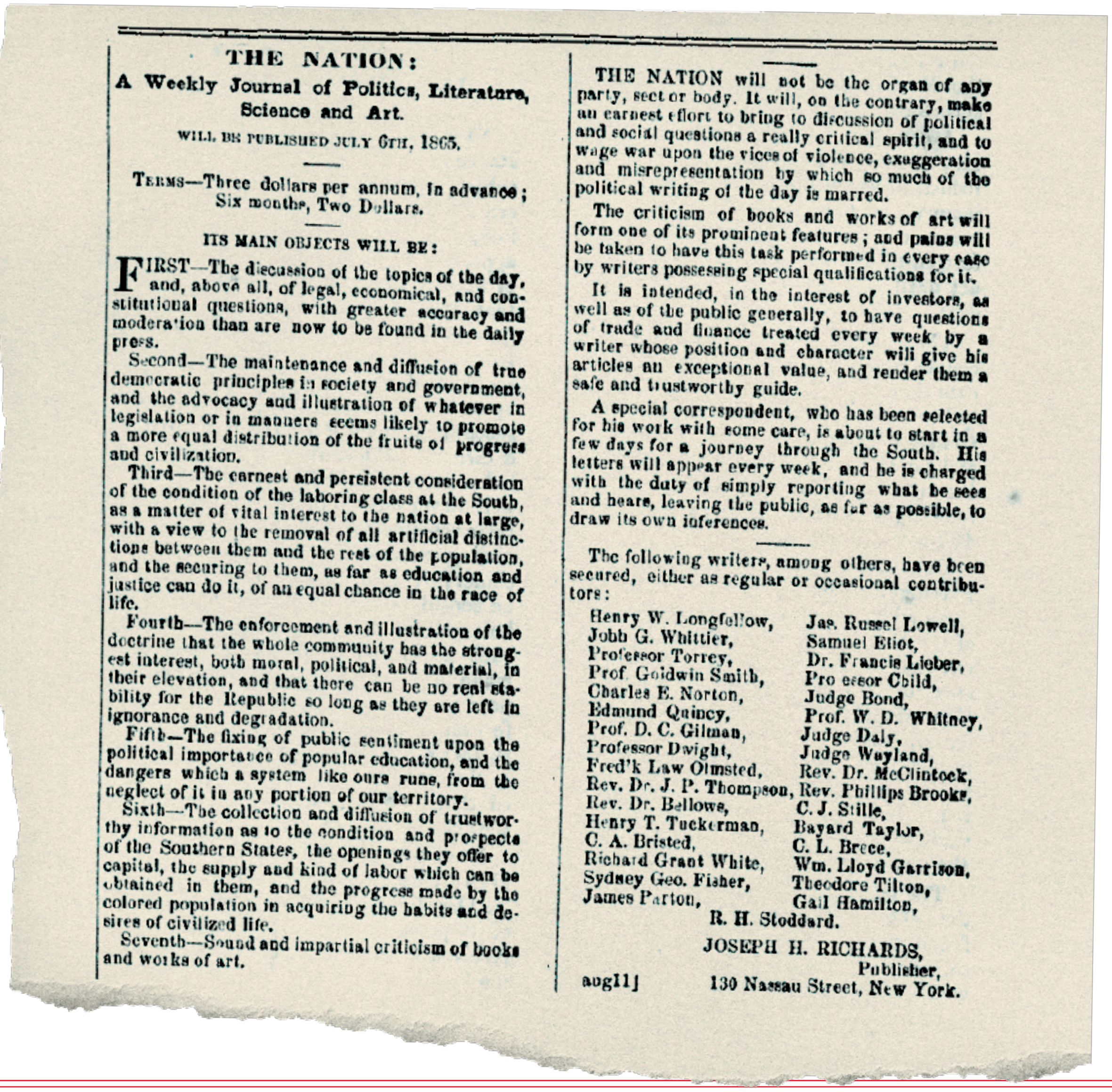
Founding Prospectus

Copies of this mission statement were distributed to potential donors, subscribers and contributors before and shortly after *The Nation*'s first issue was published on July 6, 1865. This version appeared as an advertisement in *The Elevator*, a black newspaper in San Francisco.



THE NATION:

A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, Science and Art.

WILL BE PUBLISHED JULY 6TH, 1865.

TERMS—Three dollars per annum, in advance; Six months, Two Dollars.

ITS MAIN OBJECTS WILL BE:

FIRST—The discussion of the topics of the day, and, above all, of legal, economical, and constitutional questions, with greater accuracy and moderation than are now to be found in the daily press.

Second—The maintenance and diffusion of true democratic principles in society and government, and the advocacy and illustration of whatever in legislation or in manners seems likely to promote a more equal distribution of the fruits of progress and civilization.

Third—The earnest and persistent consideration of the condition of the laboring class at the South, as a matter of vital interest to the nation at large, with a view to the removal of all artificial distinctions between them and the rest of the population, and the securing to them, as far as education and justice can do it, of an equal chance in the race of life.

Fourth—The enforcement and illustration of the doctrine that the whole community has the strongest interest, both moral, political, and material, in their elevation, and that there can be no real stability for the Republic so long as they are left in ignorance and degradation.

Fifth—The fixing of public sentiment upon the political importance of popular education, and the dangers which a system like ours runs, from the neglect of it in any portion of our territory.

Sixth—The collection and diffusion of trustworthy information as to the condition and prospects of the Southern States, the openings they offer to capital, the supply and kind of labor which can be obtained in them, and the progress made by the colored population in acquiring the habits and desires of civilized life.

Seventh—Sound and impartial criticism of books and works of art.

THE NATION will not be the organ of any party, sect or body. It will, on the contrary, make an earnest effort to bring to discussion of political and social questions a really critical spirit, and to wage war upon the vices of violence, exaggeration and misrepresentation by which so much of the political writing of the day is marred.

The criticism of books and works of art will form one of its prominent features; and pains will be taken to have this task performed in every case by writers possessing special qualifications for it.

It is intended, in the interest of investors, as well as of the public generally, to have questions of trade and finance treated every week by a writer whose position and character will give his articles an exceptional value, and render them a safe and trustworthy guide.

A special correspondent, who has been selected for his work with some care, is about to start in a few days for a journey through the South. His letters will appear every week, and he is charged with the duty of simply reporting what he sees and hears, leaving the public, as far as possible, to draw its own inferences.

The following writers, among others, have been secured, either as regular or occasional contributors:

Henry W. Longfellow,
John G. Whittier,
Professor Torrey,
Prof. Goldwin Smith,
Charles E. Norton,
Edmund Quincy,
Prof. D. C. Gilman,
Professor Dwight,
Fred'k Law Olmsted,
Rev. Dr. J. P. Thompson,
Rev. Dr. Bellows,
Henry T. Tuckerman,
C. A. Bristed,
Richard Grant White,
Sydney Geo. Fisher,
James Parton,
Jas. Russel Lowell,
Samuel Eliot,
Dr. Francis Lieber,
Professor Child,
Judge Bond,
Prof. W. D. Whitney,
Judge Daly,
Judge Wayland,
Rev. Dr. McClintock,
Rev. Phillips Brooks,
C. J. Stille,
Bayard Taylor,
C. L. Brace,
Wm. Lloyd Garrison,
Theodore Tilton,
Gail Hamilton,
R. H. Stoddard.

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aug11]

A Message From President Barack Obama

In an era of instant, 140-character news cycles and reflexive toeing of the party line, it's incredible to think of the 150-year history of *The Nation*. It's more than a magazine—it's a crucible of ideas forged in the time of Emancipation, tempered through depression and war and the civil-rights movement, and honed as sharp and relevant as ever in an age of breathtaking technological and economic change. Through it all, *The Nation* has exhibited that great American tradition of expanding our moral imaginations, stoking vigorous dissent, and simply taking the time to think through our country's challenges anew.

If I agreed with everything written in any given issue of the magazine, it would only mean that you are not doing your jobs. But whether it is your commitment to a fair shot for working Americans, or equality for all Americans, it is heartening to know that an American institution dedicated to provocative, reasoned debate and reflection in pursuit of those ideals can continue to thrive.

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Letters

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April 28, 1910

Sirs: I do not need to tell you that the reports of my recent address in Pittsburgh have, by piecemeal quotation, conveyed an entirely false impression. You yourself have made allowance for this distortion in your kind editorial of this week. I can only assure you, therefore, that I entirely agree with the views of your editorial. It would be inexcusable for any man responsible for the administration of a university to overlook the value of culture and of all that quiet and deeper development of the mind which displays itself in personal poise, in quiet insight, in the finer forms of intellectual power, rather than in public service and material achievement.

I beg that you will not believe that because I seem incapable of stating more than one side of a question in any one speech, I do not know and appreciate the other side.

Woodrow Wilson
Princeton University

August 24, 1921

My Dear Mr. Shaw:

I understand a number of friends are writing to you and urging you to come to the United States. May I say how gratified we of *The Nation* would be should you come to us?

Yours very sincerely,
Oswald Garrison Villard

Dear Mr. Villard:

This conspiracy has been going on for years; but in vain is the net spread in sight of the bird. I have no intention either of going to prison with Debs or taking my wife to Texas, where the Ku Klux Klan snatches white women out of hotel verandas and tars and feathers them. If I were dependent on martyrdom for a reputation, which happily I am not, I could go to Ireland. It is a less dangerous place; but then the voyage is shorter and much cheaper.

You are right in your impression that a number of persons are urging me to come to the United States. But why on earth do you call them my friends?

G. Bernard Shaw

March 2, 1932

Sir: I have been a subscriber to *The Nation* most of the time from its beginning until now. I read its very first issue, and was so delighted with its fine spirit, its splendid forward look, its scholarship, its daring, and the brilliant pen of Mr. Godkin, its editor, that I subscribed at once. I was then a student at the University of Chicago, and I conceived the idea of organizing a *Nation* club. We met every Thursday evening to discuss the last number of *The Nation*, all the members being pledged to read it before the meeting. We soon became enthusiastic. To spend an evening each week, with a company of alert and eager minds, thinking about, digging into, criticizing, weighing, trying to form intelligent judgments on such living, vital matters was a new and amazingly stimulating kind of education.

Mr. Editor, I venture to inquire whether there ought not to be such clubs all over the land. Ten thousand would in ten years revolutionize the country's thinking and give us a new America.

J.T. Sunderland
Ann Arbor, Mich.

April 4, 1959

Dear Sirs: [Nelson] Algren would have been a lot more sympathetic to our work in Chicago if he'd attended our reading and not taken his information from expurgated radio tapes, local newspaper crap and *Time*. None of us lisps. What fairy he been talking to?

Gregory Corso, *in respect to Shelley*
Allen Ginsberg, *in the name of Myakovsky*
Peter Orlovsky, *heart felt with the beauty of Sergei Esenin*

July 9, 1960

Dear Sirs: It is difficult to comment on Robert Spivack's article, "How Modern Is Republicanism?," because Mr. Spivack obviously doesn't understand the basic tenets of the Republican Party. I think Republicanism today is modern. It has provided civil rights, the greatest armed might in the history of the country, a return to fiscal responsibility, and a recognition that centralized government, with its attendant power, is the ultimate evil to all freedoms. That power is the one thing that the Spivacks of the country fail to take into consideration as they proclaim themselves for more and more government spending and control.

Barry Goldwater
US Senator (Ariz.)

January 1, 1968

Dear Sirs: Professor Toch asks: What have the hippies contributed to society? The answer is that they have at least contributed a little color, a little gaiety and humor, a little greater sense of freedom, to our dreary, ugly and murderous industrial culture. Have professors of psychology, with their salaries of $10,000 or $15,000 a year, contributed as much? Half as much? Anything at all?

Edward Abbey
Tucson, Ariz.

August 5, 1978

If I was doing my act I would say that I deserve all those marvelous things you said about me in your editorial ["Muhammad Ali for Congress"]. But seriously I am extremely flattered by your appraisal of me. You sure done your homework and covered all the bases. It ain't often that I am quoted so accurately. But to get down to the nubbin, I ain't interested in politics. I mean like running for office. I'm a world man. My fellow man is not just an American and my race is the human race. I'm shook up when I see a child that is going hungry or a mother who is without medical attention. These are the things I'm interested in. And of course peace. Peace for all men and all nations at all times.

Muhammad Ali
New York City

Letters are condensed. Go to thenation.com/archive.

R.O. Blechman

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150 years ago... *The Nation* magazine publishes its first issue • the New York Stock Exchange opens its permanent headquarters • Congress passes the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery • Robert E. Lee is named Commander-in-Chief of Confederate Armies • Martin Robison Delany is appointed the first black major in the US Army • William Tecumseh Sherman begins his march through Georgia • Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated for his 2nd term as US president and subsequently assassinated • W.G. Grace makes his cricketing debut • Wild Bill Hickok shoots Davis Tutt in the first Western showdown • the steamboat *SS Sultana* explodes in the Mississippi River, killing more than 1,700 passengers • Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* are first published • the Ku Klux Klan is founded by Confederate veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee • Francis Galton, inventor of the silent dog whistle, introduces eugenics • Rudyard Kipling is born • and **OR Books, proud partners in the *Nation*'s superb e-book program, is just 145 years away from publishing its first title, the *NY Times* bestseller *Going Rouge: Sarah Palin, An American Nightmare*, edited by *Nation* staffers Richard Kim and Betsy Reed.**

O/R

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Letters
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February 13, 1989

It's right to recommend *Mississippi Burning* ["Films," Stuart Klawans]. It is a thoroughly engrossing, well-acted drama that reminds us that legal segregation (apartheid) existed in our country in the not-so-distant past. Also, it correctly informs us that in the 1960s, as it had been since Reconstruction, the Klan's reign of terror was supported and often joined by local law enforcement officials and politicians. But *Mississippi Burning* has numerous and at times baffling distortions.

Blacks are only background material. There is only the barest suggestion that a movement is going on throughout the state to tear down segregation. Movement songs, the beautiful spiritual armor of that nonviolent struggle, are badly short-changed. Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were serious civil rights organizers; but what they did, what the movement was about, are completely neglected.

For anyone who lived through the period (I was in Mississippi and Georgia then), the idea that the F.B.I. brought an end to a segregated South is about as ludicrous as saying that noble elements inside the Joint Chiefs of Staff were responsible for ending the war in Vietnam.

Somehow Hollywood finds a way to use even controversial history to prove "the system works." The excuse that "we're only making a movie" is hardly enough to account for all this.

ABBIE HOFFMAN
SOLEBURY, PENN.

September 30, 1991

My girlfriend just told me to leave. I'm sitting outside on our kitchen roof (the doghouse) here in Louisville. And it's hot as hell up here. I've thought about this letter for a long time now.

My dad started getting *The Nation* in 1988. That was the year I went to college, and many times he sent me Xeroxed articles, mostly from your newspaper. I knew nothing of *The Nation*, and up to then my father had had no connections with any news sources other than the usual media. I don't know what prompted him to start exploring. He can write you all a letter about that. I am here to tell you about the impact *The Nation* has had on our lives.

My dad has changed from a man somewhat imprisoned by himself and his sphere of relations and responsibilities into a man of the world, shackled to history but with an overview and a position. And like most things in my dad's life, it has not come easy. A gift bearing the burden of responsibility. He has passed the burden down to me.

Not to say that your newspaper has been solely responsible for this growth in his or my life, but it has been an important attribute. When running against the tide of fear, indifference and loss, knowing you have comrades is especially good. And once one can look beyond self out into the world, he or she would be wise to take along a subscription to *The Nation*. In your pages, as in my heart, there is faith, belief in good and bad, and a desire for betterment.

Also, if where I am now becomes my regular resting place, old issues might be crumpled up and used for padding.

J. BRITT WALFORD
LOUISVILLE, KY.

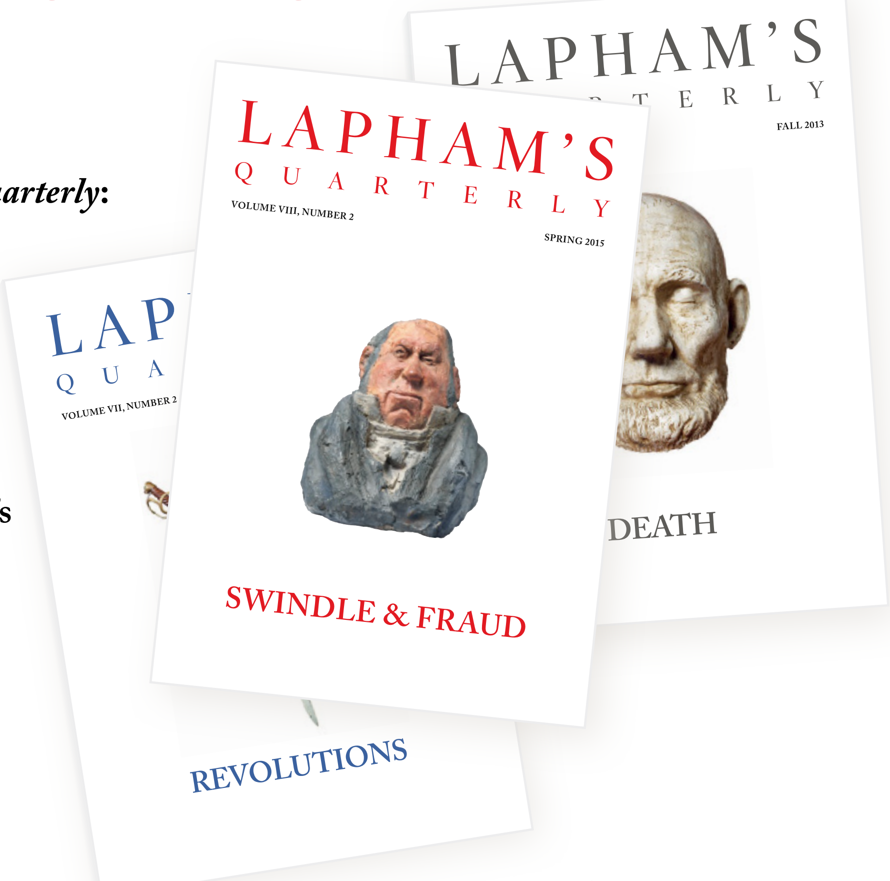
150 YEARS
IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

> *"Not to know what happened before one was born is always to be a child."*
> —*Cicero*

To the editors of *The Nation*
from the editors of *Lapham's Quarterly*:

Your splendid 150th anniversary issue comes bearing voices in time that bring life to the mind, warmth to the heart, meaning to America's democratic idea, courage to wage war with prosperous fools. You take up the weapon of the past to advance the hope of the future.

We thank you.



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Gary Younge

Irresponsible Power

Accountability isn't only for black people.

In the wake of the deaths of Mike Brown and Eric Garner, Fox News anchor Bill O'Reilly had some advice for black America: "Don't abandon your children. Don't get pregnant at 14. Don't allow your neighborhoods to deteriorate into free-fire zones. That's what the African-American community should have on their T-shirts." (That's either a very big garment or very small lettering.)

Whenever black kids get shot, black parents get lectured about personal responsibility. If you raised your kids better, goes the conservative logic, we wouldn't have to shoot them. Arguments about systemic discrimination and racist legacies are derided as liberal excuses for bad behavior. Neither history nor economics nor politics made Mike Brown grab Darren Wilson's gun—that was his choice. Individuals, we are told, are responsible for their own actions and must be held accountable for them.

The vehemence with which this principle is held is eclipsed only by the speed with which it is abandoned when it becomes inconvenient. Discussions about choices and accountability change tenor when we shift from talking about the black and the poor to the powerful and well-connected.

BENEATH THE RADAR

The release of the Senate's torture report in December revealed far more extensive and brutal interrogation techniques than had been admitted previously, and it also confirmed that the CIA had lied to Congress, the White House and the media. This didn't happen by itself. To take just one example, someone or some persons had to purée a mixture of hummus, pasta with sauce, nuts and raisins; pour it into a tube; forcibly bend Majid Khan over; shove the tube up his anus and then "let gravity do the work." And then they lied about it. The report showed without question that American interrogators were operating outside both domestic and international law. And yet none have been arrested and charged, let alone prosecuted.

Similarly, millions of Americans and many foreign leaders were spied upon by the NSA. A federal judge has ruled such actions unconstitutional. But metadata does not collect itself; instead, its collection was both ordered and executed by people who then lied about it until they were exposed. Not a single person has been held responsible. I have yet to hear Bill O'Reilly custom-design a T-shirt for those people.

Indeed, the only known arrests in these cases have been of those who exposed the crimes. Edward Snowden is on the run; Chelsea Manning—the source for WikiLeaks, which showed the US military killing innocents and laughing about it—is in jail; John Kiriakou, who blew the whistle on waterboarding, is out of jail but still under house arrest. The crime, it seems, is not to break the law but to report the infraction.

The point here is not to demand the slaughter of a scapegoat. All of the incidents above were underpinned by shortcomings that are fundamentally systemic and must be addressed. But it is difficult to see how that can happen in the future if nobody pays a penalty now for past wrongdoing. The moral hazard in failing to hold people to account is self-evident: it sets a bad example. Black kids aren't the only ones who need role models.

But then the Manichaean reasoning of the right was always bogus. Holding people responsible for their actions does not contradict the notion that those actions have a context—just because we have free will, it does not follow that we have free rein. So when the left argues that problems are structural, we do not mean that individuals should not be held to account, but that without also holding accountable the institutions that made their actions possible, one merely changes the players, not the game.

Which brings us back to those Bill O'Reilly T-shirts. The federal investigations into Ferguson lay bare a corrupt, racist kleptocracy in which police harassed African-Americans with impunity, stuffing the city's coffers with their money and its jails with their bodies. But when officials or their friends broke the law, they had no problem pardoning themselves. "Don't steal, cheat, harass or discriminate": that's what these white people should have on their T-shirts.

This was the system that killed Mike Brown and produced his killer. The Justice Department found no evidence to prosecute Darren Wilson, but ample evidence to incriminate the Ferguson police and the broader criminal-justice system. As of this writing, the county clerk has been fired, the city manager has "parted ways," and two police officers, the municipal judge and the chief of police have resigned. Wilson, it appears, was the only incorruptible man in the city. Nobody has been charged. The law apparently does not apply to them.

Nobody in Ferguson's white power structure has been charged with a crime. The law apparently does not apply to them.

"Where all are guilty, no one is," argued the political theorist Hannah Arendt. "Confessions of collective guilt are the best possible safeguard against the discovery of culprits, and the very magnitude of the crime the best excuse for doing nothing."

Welcome to Ferguson, where Mike Brown allegedly stole cigarillos and is dead, while the members of the white power structure stole an entire civic apparatus and the constitutional rights of black residents but remain at their desks. **150th**

ILLUSTRATION: ANDY FRIEDMAN

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Eric Alterman

A Wake-Up Call for US Liberals

The state of conservative intellectual debate demonstrates the power of movement crazies.

A week before his 2009 inauguration, President-elect Barack Obama chose as his first high-profile social engagement a dinner party at George Will's house, where he was joined by William Kristol, Charles Krauthammer and David Brooks. Obama no doubt intended to demonstrate his desire to reach across the ideological divide and engage his neoconservative critics in a healthy debate. Conservatives saw a president they could roll.

Part of the problem was Obama's misplaced confidence that he could heal the divisions forged in the Bush era. A second complication arose from his unique position as the first African-American president. But the fundamental problem was a much deeper one that, in retrospect, has come to define US politics in the Obama era and remains the greatest obstacle to liberal progress.

The Liberal Media

The primary difference between liberalism and conservatism, at least in theory, is that the latter is an ideology and the former isn't. Conservatism, as Milton Friedman argued, posits that "freedom in economic arrangements is itself a component of freedom broadly understood, so economic freedom is an end in itself." Liberalism, however, as Lionel Trilling observed, "is a large tendency rather than a concise body of doctrine." And while John Kenneth Galbraith helpfully pointed out that only those programs and policies that honor "the emancipation of belief" are worthy of the term, liberalism, at bottom, is pragmatism. Conservatives desire low taxes and small government because this is how they define freedom. They like to pretend that liberals prefer the opposite in both cases, but the truth is that liberals are OK with whatever works.

Our political dysfunction has many sources, but one way to describe our problem is this: we have allowed conservatives to define the terms of debate at a time when conservatives have lost all sense of moral, intellectual and especially practical responsibility.

In *The Liberal Imagination*, Trilling famously complained that he could find "no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation." What we had instead were "irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas." Conservatives subsequently invested a great deal of money to address this problem, and the result was the rise of a bevy of right-wing intellectuals—Friedman, James Q. Wilson, Alan Bloom and Gertrude Himmelfarb among them—able to offer arguments that liberals ignored at their peril.

Today, however, we have no such figures and nothing resembling challenging ideas. Will, undoubtedly America's most prominent conservative intellectual, thinks that rape victims enjoy their "privileges," that Ebola can be spread through the air, and that global warming is a hoax. Faced with the fact that 97 percent of climatologists have formed a scientific consensus about man-made climate change, he responded, "Where did that figure come from? They pluck these things from the ether"—as if his own purposeful ignorance were a counter to empirical data.

Conservative "wise man" Bill Kristol has achieved this status by proving himself, time and again, to be the worst predictor in the history of the punditocracy. Kristol recently summed up his political philosophy in a debate about US policy in the Middle East with Laura Ingraham—herself a symbol of the decline of conservative thought—by asking, "What's the harm of bombing them at least for a few weeks and seeing what happens?" Charles Krauthammer's analyses evince a similarly reflexive belligerence, while David Brooks, believe it or not, is too liberal to qualify.

Why do such smart guys say such stupid things? The answer lies in the locus of power in today's conservative movement. The Koch brothers make billions off the exploitation of carbon-producing fossil fuels, while donating more than $67 million to groups that deny the destruction it causes. This is to say nothing of the nearly $900 million they plan to raise for the Republican presidential nominee in 2016. Casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, who handed out $150 million to the Republicans and related groups during the 2012 election cycle, believes the United States should drop an atomic bomb in the Iranian desert and say: "See! The next one is in the middle of Tehran." Media mogul Rupert Murdoch thinks all the world's Muslims should be "held responsible" for "their growing jihadist cancer." His networks and newspapers spread the idiotic calumny that the president is a secret Muslim and an undocumented alien who hates all white people (including, apparently, his own mother).

Liberals have let conservatives define the terms of debate at a time when conservatives have lost all sense of responsibility.

Today's conservative intellectuals aren't even bothering to offer "irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas." Instead, they're making calculated attempts to undermine our democracy, exploiting and manipulating a public that has decreasing resources for the kind of reliable information that would lead to a pragmatic "liberal" response. It's time we woke up to that reality while we still have a country—and a planet—left to save.

150th

ILLUSTRATION: ANDY FRIEDMAN

Congratulations to *The Nation* on your 150th anniversary

Thank you for steadfastly carrying the torch of progressive journalism. We are proud to share *The Nation*'s and Katrina vanden Heuvel's deep commitment to the important fight for social and economic justice.

– Keith Mestrich, President & CEO

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***THE NATION*: A BIOGRAPHY**

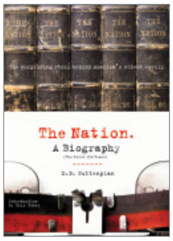
1865-1915

Founded by abolitionists to finish the job of Emancipation, The Nation *became a moribund defender of the status quo. But its firm anti-imperialism, and one crusading editor, brought it back to life.*

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

On June 25, 1863, as Confederate forces fought their way north toward Gettysburg, a group of wealthy New Yorkers gathered at the Union League Club on 17th Street to hear a pitch. The speaker, journalist and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, laid out a "dream of an honest weekly paper." The idea was to aim not for a large circulation, but for a select, influential readership. By the end of the evening, Olmsted had his first thousand dollars. By the end of the week, he had trustees, a fundraising committee and an editor: his friend E.L. Godkin, an Anglo-Irish journalist who had covered the Crimean War and toured the American South (inspired by Olmsted's own writings). "The thing starts so favorably," Olmsted wrote to his wife, "I shall go into it strong, meaning to succeed."

But Olmsted was impulsive, and when an offer came that August to manage an enormous gold mine in California, he turned "The Paper," as they still called it, over to Godkin, along with a letter of introduction to Charles Eliot Norton, editor of *The North American Review*. Godkin met with Norton and received encouragement, but not investment, so he gave up.



Excerpts from The Nation: A Biography, *available as an e-book or paperback at www.thenation.com/ebooks.*

In April 1865, Godkin wrote to Olmsted to congratulate him on "the great events of the last fortnight." Lee's surrender at Appomattox had left him "dumfoundered," and though he was thrilled by the Union victory, "I confess I should be very anxious about the terms of reconstruction, if Lincoln were not to be president for the next four years." The letter was dated April 12, and long before it reached California, Lincoln was dead. Yet even as the nation was binding up its wounds and mourning the slain emancipator, the prospect of victory was tearing the abolitionist movement apart.

The question was whether the Thirteenth Amendment, in decreeing the end of slavery, also meant the abolitionists' work was done. William Lloyd Garrison, editor of *The Liberator*, thought it was. Declaring "my vocation as an Abolitionist, thank God, is ended," and wishing to devote himself to women's suffrage and other causes, Garrison proposed that the American Anti-Slavery Society, which he had founded, should be dissolved. But Wendell Phillips, who had joined the movement after rescuing Garrison from a Boston lynch mob thirty years earlier, disagreed, and a bitter power struggle ensued.

It was in the midst of this battle for the future, and legacy, of the abolitionist movement that James Miller McKim, a Philadelphia activist with friends in both camps, determined to start a national weekly to continue the work of *The Liberator* "on a broader ground." McKim soon had his funding, as well as a name for the new magazine: *The Nation*. Now he needed a staff. Norton, of course, knew about Godkin's interest in starting his own weekly, and after getting him to recant his skepticism about black male suffrage—his suggestion that freedmen should have to earn a living for ten years before voting was hardly a position that would appeal to *The Nation*'s backers—Norton recommended Godkin to his friend McKim.

"No. I is afloat," Godkin wrote to Norton on July 5, 1865, "and the tranquility which still reigns in this city, under the circumstances, I confess amazes me."

"The political complexion of *The Nation* is not at all doubtful," sniffed *The New York Times* in a review of the first issue. Radical on all questions regarding the freed slaves, the magazine viewed the Civil War's end as a triumph not just for the Union, but for "democratic principles everywhere." Nor did *The Nation* have a great deal of sympathy for the defeated slaveholders. "However much opposed we may be to political vengeance," the editors wrote, "there is nobody who will deny that men who have made themselves conspicuous in instigating an appeal from the ballot to the sword ought to be compelled, after defeat in the field, to hold their tongues for the remainder of their days."

But *The Nation*'s darts weren't always so well aimed. When Wendell Phillips took exception to the magazine's treatment of Radical Republican Senator Charles Sumner, an editorial dismissed the great abolitionist as one who, "from a great height in the air, [behaves] as a kind of vulture to scare the more mindless, cowardly, and laggard Radicals into a show of eagerness and activity." *The Nation*'s young literary editor, Wendell Phillips Garrison—William Lloyd Garrison's son and James Miller McKim's son-in-law—joined the attack, sneering at the man whose name he bore.

The Nation*'s first office was on Nassau Street. It spent nearly a century in that neighborhood, mostly in the majestic* Evening Post *building on nearby Newspaper Row.*

Godkin's evident contempt for Phillips, and his only partly concealed wobbling on the question of black suffrage—ideally, he suggested in the second issue, the government should "exclude everybody from the polls who can neither read nor write"—upset the magazine's Radical backers. Godkin told a friend in 1866 that he was "afraid to visit Boston this winter, lest the stockholders of *The Nation* should lynch me."

DESPITE LOSING MANY OF ITS INITIAL BACKERS, *The Nation* remained for some time a radical organ. Whether the topic was female suffrage—a movement that Godkin wished "all possible success," arguing both that women deserved the vote "if they desire it," and that "we think they ought to desire it"—or the possibility of using solar energy as a replacement for coal, *The Nation* did not shy away from radical solutions.

"No. 1 is afloat," Godkin wrote to a friend, "and the tranquility which still reigns in this city...I confess amazes me."

Yet the magazine, along with the rest of the country, gradually wearied of Reconstruction, and its abandonment of the freed slaves makes for painful reading today. Beyond excuse, beyond extenuation, it also defies simple explanation. What can be said is that from 1870 onward, Godkin and *The Nation* became increasingly the voice not merely of the Eastern establishment, but of the most reactionary elements within that establishment. Bound by his "liberal" principles to oppose any attempt to interfere with the "freedom of contract," Godkin had always resisted calls for an eight-hour workday and worried that a government able to prohibit children from working in factories—a goal, he allowed, for which "there is a great deal to be said"—might end by telling "us what to eat, drink, avoid, hope, fear, and believe." When the first great railroad strikes convulsed the United States in July 1877, Godkin was appalled: no government, he wrote, could tolerate conditions in which a few thousand "day-laborers of the lowest class can suspend, even for a whole day, the traffic and industry of a great nation, merely as a means of extorting ten or twenty cents a day more in wages." Blaming foreign agitators, Godkin called for a show of force: "The kindest thing which can be done for the great multitudes of untaught men who have been received on these shores…is to show them promptly that society as here organized, on individual freedom of thought and action, is impregnable, and can be no more shaken than the order of nature."

The Liberal Republican revolt, begun in 1872 as an abortive attempt to deny Ulysses Grant a second term, brought Godkin into closer contact with Henry Villard, a German immigrant who had covered the Civil War for the *New-York Daily Tribune* and married the sister of Wendell Phillips Garrison. Returning briefly to Germany for health reasons, Villard was asked by a group of German investors to manage their holdings in American railroads, eventually taking control of the Northern Pacific. With Godkin as one of his front men, Villard bought the *New-York Evening Post* as a vehicle for his interests. But Godkin came at a price: in addition to being named one of the editors, Godkin demanded that Villard also buy *The Nation*, leaving the new owner's brother-in-law (and Godkin's longtime underling), W.P. Garrison, in nominal charge.

IN THE 1890S, *THE NATION* PICKED A FIGHT WITH the whole country—indeed, with the whole trend of contemporary American foreign policy. The roots of the magazine's opposition to America becoming a global empire are as tangled as the history of American anti-imperialism. Though many of those who opposed America's wars did so for the reasons cited by Henry David Thoreau in "Civil Disobedience," there had also always been a less high-minded reluctance to get entangled in the affairs of darker, non-European peoples—especially if they might then become American citizens. Nothing but trouble, *The Nation* warned in 1898, would come from "dependencies inhabited by ignorant and inferior races" with whom Americans had no business other than "carpet-baggery."

When the cruiser *Maine* sank in Havana Harbor in February 1898, *The Nation* was ready. "The need of opposing and exposing the diabolical newspapers which are trying to lie the country into war must be obvious," the magazine declared. Of all the causes in *The Nation*'s history, anti-imperialism is the one on which the magazine has never wavered.

SINCE HIS FATHER'S DEATH IN 1900, OSWALD Garrison Villard had served a long apprenticeship, only becoming president of the Nation Company—effectively the magazine's publisher—in 1908. Slowly, however, he began to make his influence felt. In 1909, Villard was part of a small group of black and white Americans, including his friend W.E.B. Du Bois and the journalist Ida Wells, who founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1912, Villard also maneuvered *The Nation* into endorsing Woodrow Wilson after being impressed by the Princeton president's efforts to abolish the elitist "eating clubs" from campus. A chance meeting on a cruise from Bermuda had cemented the friendship between the two men.

But they fell out over American entry to the World War, as Villard kept pressing for the "peace without victory" that Wilson himself had once promised the country. Though Villard, and *The Nation*, lauded Wilson's Fourteen Points in January 1918, he also praised "those amazing men, Lenin and Trotsky," whose revolutionary victory brought Russia out of the war. Villard's refusal to join Wilson's crusade set him apart from every other editor in New York—including many of his own employees. Deciding to concentrate his efforts and lift some of the financial burden, he finally took over *The Nation* himself and sold the *Post*. Radicalized by the war, Villard, and *The Nation*, was now free. **150th**

1865-1875

[1 of 4]

First Issue

[July 6, 1865]

5-16-1868
President Andrew Johnson, impeached by the House, is acquitted by the Senate.

7-9-1868
The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, establishing "due process" and "equal protection of the laws."

3-18-1871
The Paris Commune is established—led, or so *The Nation* scoffs, by "sentimentalists" and "grossly ignorant" laborers.

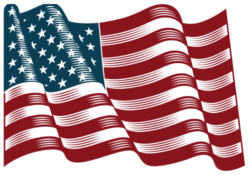
Note:

These archival pieces have been condensed. Authors of unsigned articles are noted when known. Illustrations did not appear in The Nation *until the early 1920s.*

The Great Festival

EDITORIAL

July 6, 1865



Before this meets the eyes of our readers, the Fourth of July will have been celebrated, and never before have we had such cause of rejoicing. It is not simply the birth of the nation which we now commemorate, but its regeneration. We celebrate not only the close of a long and bloody civil war, but the close of that "irrepressible conflict" which absorbed all the intellect of the country, perverted its understanding, corrupted its morals, and employed most of its moral and mental energy, either in the attack or defence, in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, of one of the worst forms of barbarism;—a conflict which began to exercise a paralyzing influence on industry and to poison social intercourse. We celebrate not simply the national independence, but the close of the agitation about slavery, and the extinction of slavery itself.

It is not simply the triumph of American democracy that we rejoice over, but the triumph of democratic principles everywhere. The vigor of popular government, the prodigious national vitality which it develops and fosters, received its most splendid illustration in our last campaign. There is no believer in the capacity of the human race for greater happiness and greater virtue than it has yet attained, who will not rejoice with us this week. If the conflict of ages, the great strife between the few and the many, between privilege and equality, between law and power, between opinion and the sword, was not closed on the day Lee threw down his arms, the issue was placed beyond doubt.

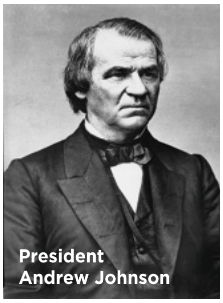
If we cared to play the slave behind the Consul in his chariot in the triumphal progress, we might say much of the risks we still run, of the stumbling-blocks which still bestrew our path, of the temptations to which we may succumb, or of the thousand sins that will assuredly beset us. We prefer to reserve this less agreeable task to some season when it will be listened to with more attention, and will not damp honorable and fairly won rejoicing. There are few who celebrate the Fourth of July this year, who do not find, in the recent history of their families or those of their friends, reminders that the brightest picture has its dark side. For how many thousands who went forth to hasten the great consummation over which the nation is singing paeans, do the bells ring, and the banners wave, and the music swell in vain!

The Danger of the Hour

EDITORIAL (E.L. GODKIN)

September 21, 1865

The question of the wisdom or folly of President Johnson's plan of reconstruction turns upon the amount of confidence which ought to be reposed in the good faith and good intentions of the Southern people. He is evidently of opinion that there ought not to be any limit to this confidence. We are given to understand that before very long he means not only to permit the militia to be called out in all the Southern States, but to recall the Federal troops, and leave our Southern brethren entirely to their own devices.



President Andrew Johnson

What we fear from the President's policy is, not a renewal of the war, but the restoration of the state of things which led to the war. We do not anticipate a revival of slavery "pure and simple;" but it was not slavery in itself which led to the revolt, but the state of feeling and of manners which slavery bred—the hatred of democracy, the contempt for human rights, the horror of equality before the law, the proneness to violence which always results from inequality, the tone which all these things communicated to Southern manners, literature, education, religion, and society. What we fear now is the reconstruction at the South, not of "slave society," properly so called, but of a society so closely resembling slave society as to reproduce most of the phenomena which made slave society, politically, so obnoxious, and so dangerous. This government, we now know, cannot be carried on, if any portion of the population which lives under it is legally kept in degradation, or legally excluded from the enjoyment of any of the rights or privileges possessed by the rest of the community.

The great question to be answered by those who propose handing the South over immediately to the control of the Southern whites, is not whether they can be trusted not to revolt again, or not to restore slavery again—we know them to be physically unable to do either of these things—but whether they can be trusted to establish among them that form of social organization which we know to be necessary to the peace and happiness of the nation, to the vindication of our own principles before the world, and to secure which we have spent millions of treasure and torrents of blood. Nobody will venture to answer this in the affirmative. Nobody has answered it in the affirmative.

We are all affected by the languor which was sure to follow the prodigious efforts of the war. Trade is rapidly reviving, and Southern orders are just as sweet and as soothing, Southern tongues just as glib and as smooth, as ever they were. We are witnessing to-day, in the impression produced on Northern opinion by Southern professions, a fresh display of that consummate political ability which, for half a century, laid a large, acute, intelligent, and industrious community prostrate at the feet of a few thousand slave-owners, the product of a society on which civilization had left only the faintest traces. And we run great risk at this moment of being dragged into compromises, the consequences of which our children will rue, as we have rued those of our fathers.

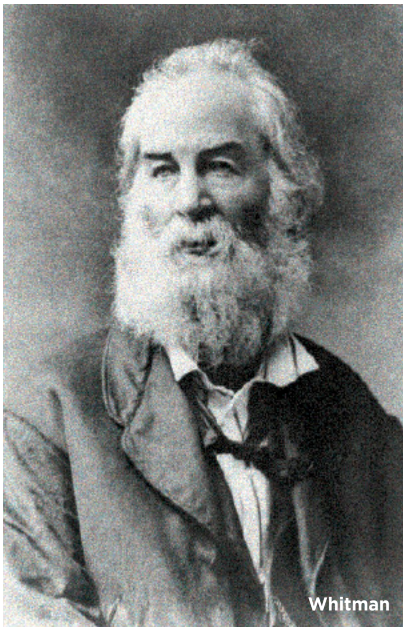
Mr. Walt Whitman

HENRY JAMES

November 16, 1865

It has been a melancholy task to read this book [*Drum-Taps*]; and it is a still more melancholy one to write about it. It exhibits the effort of an essentially prosaic mind to lift itself, by a prolonged muscular strain, into poetry. Like hundreds of other good patriots, during the last four years, Mr. Walt Whitman has imagined that a certain amount of violent sympathy with the great deeds and sufferings of our soldiers, and of admiration for our national energy, together with a ready command of picturesque language, are sufficient inspiration for a poet. If this were the case, we had been a nation of poets.

Mr. Whitman prides himself especially on the substance—the life—of his poetry. It may be rough, it may be grim, it may be clumsy—such we take to be the author's argument—but it is sincere, it is sublime, it appeals to the soul of man, it is the voice of a people.



Whitman

A great deal of verse that is nothing but words has, during the war, been sympathetically sighed over and cut out of newspaper corners, because it has possessed a certain simple melody. But Mr. Whitman's verse would have failed even of this triumph, for the simple reason that no triumph, however small, is won but through the exercise of art, and that this volume is an offense against art.

It is not enough to be grim and rough and careless; common sense is also necessary, for it is by common sense that we are judged. There exists in even the commonest minds, in literary matters, a certain precise instinct of conservatism, which is very shrewd in detecting wanton eccentricities. To this instinct Mr. Whitman's attitude seems monstrous. It is monstrous because it pretends to persuade the soul while it slights the intellect; because it pretends to gratify the feelings while it outrages the taste. The point is that it does this *on theory*, wilfully, consciously, arrogantly. Mr. Whitman sits down at the outset and counts out the intelligence. This were indeed a wise precaution on his part if the intelligence were only submissive! If she could find a voice she would probably address Mr. Whitman as follows:

"To become adopted as a national poet, it is not enough to discard everything in particular and to accept everything in general, to amass crudity upon crudity, to discharge the undigested contents of your blotting-book into the lap of the public. You must respect the public you address; for it has taste, if you have not.

> ***"To become a national poet, it is not enough to discharge the undigested contents of your blotting-book into the lap of the public."***

James

"If it has sustained a monstrous war, and practised human nature's best in so many ways for the last five years, it is not to put up with spurious poetry afterwards. To sing aright our battles and our glories it is not enough to have served in a hospital (however praiseworthy the task in itself), to be aggressively careless, inelegant, and ignorant, and to be constantly preoccupied with yourself. It is not enough to be rude, lugubrious, and grim. You must also be serious. You must forget yourself in your ideas. Your personal qualities—the vigor of your temperament, the manly independence of your nature, the tenderness of your heart—these facts are impertinent. You must be *possessed*, and you must strive to possess your possession. If in your striving you break into divine eloquence, then you are a poet. If the idea which possesses you is the idea of your country's greatness, then you are a national poet; and not otherwise."

5,000

***The Nation's* circulation by the third issue**

> *"Emerson spoke to me last week of* [The Nation's] *excellence, its superiority to any other journal we have or have had; its breadth, its variety, its self-sustainment, its admirable style of thought and expression."*
>
> –Charles Eliot Norton to E.L. Godkin, 1865

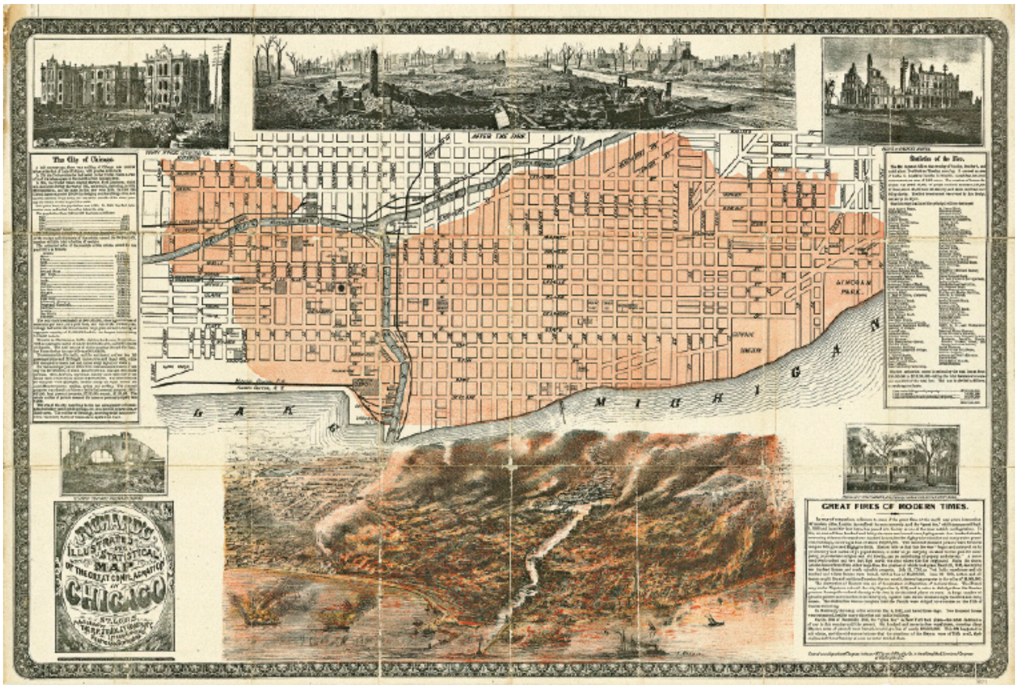
The South as It Is

JOHN RICHARD DENNETT

August 3, 1865

So much has been said of late about the lofty hopes which the emancipated slave entertains in reference to his future, of the insolence of his demeanor, of the certainty that in his hands freedom will become license, that I have looked with care to find indications of these things. So far as concerns the Negro's manners, it seems to me that he has by no means removed all traces of his former servility of demeanor. My observation has, of course, been confined within narrow limits of time and space, but as far as I have seen, in the hotels, at barber shops, in public conveyances, in the streets, the colored people appear good-natured, well behaved, and certainly far more respectful and deferential than one ever expects to find white Americans. At Norfolk and Portsmouth, towns where, a short time previous to my visit and a short time after, whites and blacks were engaged in savage party fights, I met some Negroes who might be classed as exceptions to this description; but even in those towns, though there was little visible good humor, there was no insolence. How long the deportment of the blacks will retain the characteristic marks of their servitude, and how long a time will elapse before white people cease to be more angry at a Negro's impudence than at a white man's, are questions only to be decided by future experience.

PHOTOS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS


The City of Chicago
GREAT FIRES OF MODERN TIMES.
RICHARD'S ILLUSTRATED & STATISTICAL MAP OF THE GREAT CONFLAGRATION IN CHICAGO
L A K E
M I C H I G A N

Richard's Illustrated and Statistical Map of the Great Conflagration in Chicago, circa 1871, details the burned areas of the city and depicts scenes of the widespread destruction (original map in the University of Chicago Library's Map Collection).

Chicago in Distress

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

NOVEMBER 9, 1871

The fire started half a mile southwest, which was directly to windward, of the central quarter, rapidly carried its heights, and swept down from them upon the comparatively suburban northern quarter, clearing it to the outskirts, where the few scattered houses remaining were protected by a dense grove of trees. The field of ruin is a mile in width, bounded by the lake on one side and mainly by a branch of the river on the other, and four miles in length, thus being as large as the half of New York City from the Battery to the Central Park, or as the whole of the peninsula of Boston.

Besides the extent of the ruins, what is most remarkable is the completeness with which the fire did its work, as shown by the prostration of the ruins and the extraordinary absence of smoke-stains, brands, and all *débris*, except stone, brick, and iron, bleached to an ashy pallor. The distinguishing smell of the ruins is that of charred earth. In not more than a dozen cases have the four walls of any of the great blocks, or of any buildings, been left standing. It is the exception to find even a single corner or chimney holding together. It has been possible, from the top of an omnibus, to see men standing on the ground three miles away across what was the densest, loftiest, and most substantial part of the city.

Many, a moment after they had been out to observe the flames in the distance, and had judged that they had still a chance to save their houses, were suddenly driven by a fierce heat, borne down upon them apparently from above, to flee, leaving even their choicest property, though previously packed and ready to be carried by hand. The radiated heat from the larger buildings was so strong that it scorched men ten rods away across the wind. Families were driven from one place of refuge to another—in several cases, to my knowledge, four times, and, finally, a few into the lake; many thousands into the open country. Some were floated or swam across the river.

Burning fragments of wooden parapets, sheets of roofing metal, signs, and scuttle-doors were carried great distances, and, with blazing felt, tarred paper, and canvas, and myriads of smaller sparks, sometimes swept down upon the fugitives with a terrific roar. Very sensible men have declared that they were fully impressed at such a time with the conviction that it was the burning of the world. Loose horses and cows, as well as people of all conditions on foot and in wagons, were hurrying half-blinded through the streets together, and it often happened that husbands and wives, parents and children, even mothers and infants, were forced apart and lost to each other. Sudden desolation thus added to the previous horrors, made some frantic who would otherwise have maintained composure. In general, however, the people, especially the households of the north side, appear to have manifested a greater degree of self-possession and of considerate thoughtfulness one for another, under these circumstances, than can be easily believed. Almost every one holds the remembrance of some instance of quiet heroism, often flavored with humor. The remains of only about one hundred human bodies have thus far been recognized in the ruins, and the coroner and others are of the opinion that not more than two hundred lives were lost. That the number should be so small can only be accounted for by the fact that there was an active volunteer rear-guard of cool-headed Christians, who often entered and searched houses to which they were strangers, dragging out their inmates sometimes by main force, and often when some, caught unawares, were bewildered, fainting, or suffocating. One still sees burned garments and singed beards.

How the city is to recover from this blow no one can yet see, but the difficulty is engaging the study of its best and most conservative minds; and that in some way it will recover, and that it will presently advance even with greater rapidity, but with far firmer steps, than ever before, those most staggered and cast down by it have not a shadow of doubt.

The Growth of Corporate and Decline of Governmental Power

EDITORIAL

MAY 15, 1873

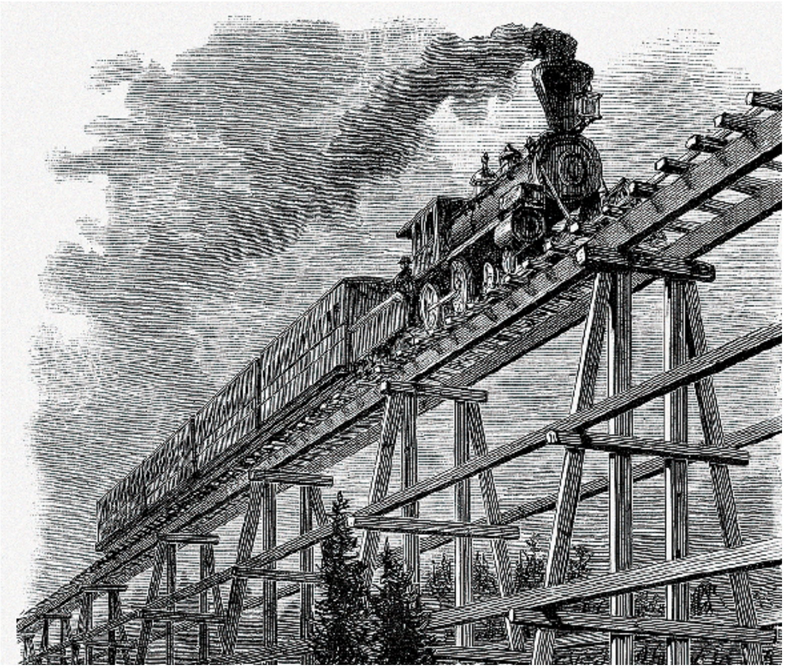
Some thirty or forty years ago American society discovered that this country lies remote from European complications. In this safety of isolation American society said: “We will lay aside the responsibilities and sacrifices of citizenship, and religiously ascribing all virtues and all growth and progress to a republican form of government, will allow our own to go to the dogs, devoting ourselves meanwhile to the business of getting rich.” The broadest views of duty were covered by the word “industry,” and of elevation by the word “wealth.” These ideas were flung about by the press, and caught up and adopted by society, so that every philanthropist who addressed a public school generally summed up his moral teachings in the prediction that all the good boys would work hard and get rich.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
E PLURIBUS UNUM
420 GRAINS 900 FINE
TRADE DOLLAR

Such sayings as, “The world is governed too much,” “The less government you have, the better,” “Individual enterprise will accomplish everything, if you will only give it a chance,” were adopted as incontrovertible maxims, and society set itself to giving individual enterprise all the chance it asked. At the same time, the science of government, which had received so much attention from the earliest statesmen, was allowed to die out in this country, and the business of governing was gradually abandoned to a class of professional politicians contemptuously called office-holders and office-seekers, and the task of serving one’s country fell into general disrepute.

In a country so undeveloped on the one hand, and so rich in resources on the other, there were innumerable fields for individual enterprise—and fields of such vast extent as to be beyond the powers of any single fortune. Hence it was inevitable that individual enterprise should seek the aid of combined capitalists, and that these combinations should take the form of corporations. Such corporations were manifestly too small, too weak, and too local to control legislatures, or seriously conflict with the interests of the community which created them. They were practically, as well as theoretically, the creatures of the legislature, and created for the public convenience. In time, however, these several corporate links, with others of the great chain, became welded together, and since then consolidations here and “giant enterprises” there have brought great corporations upon the whole country. The immense power of great and concentrated wealth which is actively employed made itself almost immediately felt.

With such new forces springing into existence in every State, more numerous, if not intrinsically greater, than was ever known before in the history of corporate bodies, and growing rapidly into a magnitude that could never have been anticipated, and with the efficiency of American government constantly lessening, it is apparent that a time might, indeed *must*, come when Government would be really too inefficient to maintain the rights of society by duly restraining their aggressive powers. Such is not far from the condition of American society at the present moment. Corporations to a certain extent take the place in American society of the privileged classes in aristocratic Europe; for they constitute a feudal system which exacts service, if not homage, from an influential portion of every community, and which carries on a disguised warfare with the Government, sometimes in Congress, sometimes in State legislatures, in which warfare concentrated wealth and power are arrayed against the wishes and, in some cases, interests of society at large.



SLAVE SONGS

1867

The Nation Press publishes ***Slave Songs of the United States***, the first collection of its kind in history.

PHOTO OF *SLAVE SONGS* CARE OF CONTACT EDITIONS, TORONTO, ONTARIO

> *“No generation of feudal barons lived more openly or undisguisedly by force and fraud than do the railroad-men of our times.”*
>
> –Editorial, 1868

Jay Gould, financier and fantastically successful manipulator of railroad stocks, circa 1865

[January 2, 1879]

3-5-1877
Rutherford B. Hayes is inaugurated president despite losing the popular vote. *The Nation* proposes abolishing the Electoral College, whose members "serve no useful purpose" except to create "much sin and sorrow."

5-24-1883
The Brooklyn Bridge opens. "The ferry companies noted a great falling off in receipts," *The Nation* reports.

Tammany Hall, circa 1914

The Rising Against the New Boss

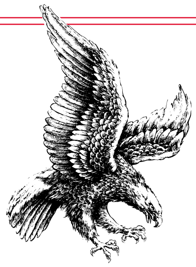
EDITORIAL

October 21, 1875

There is no very great mystery about the power either of Tammany Hall or of the "boss" who for the time being "runs" it, and it is on this account that we can hardly be expected to feel much enthusiasm at the prospect of a rising against the present one. Within the memory of the present generation of men in New York there has always been a "boss," and at periodical intervals there has been a "rising" against him. Formerly it was Fernando Wood; then it was Tweed; now it is Kelly. Moreover, there are certain facts which tend always to the production of "bosses" in this city. New York is Democratic and very wealthy, and is managed through machinery which is very intricate and difficult to get the run of. This machine must be managed by a set of men who devote a very large part of their time to it, and as politics is not an attractive profession to people of wealth and intelligence in this country, these men will be in the main poor men who are "after" money. Honestly or dishonestly, Wood, Tweed, and Kelly get rich out of the city treasury, and then, being men of property, they use it to advance their friends and punish their enemies.

"HONEST JOHN" KELLY was the boss of Tammany Hall from 1874 until 1886.

This process goes on without attracting much attention, until the "boss" has made a good many enemies, when he in turn is denounced as a "usurper" and "tyrant," and with the aid of good citizens and the press he is "hurled from power" into ignominy and oblivion—or Congress. It is necessary, however, for the reformers and exhorters who wish to hurl the "boss" from power to remember that it is a process which must not be repeated too frequently. In former times, the practice used to be to allow the memory of the last rising to die out before a new one was begun. The young and enthusiastic can always be persuaded once in their lives that if they will only rise and hurl a "boss" from power, all will be well—that there will be no more fraud or peculation, no more interference with the independence of the judiciary, no more Tammany Hall. But when they have seen it done once, and yet are made painfully aware that Tammany has not been swept away, nor is the judiciary independent, nor has corruption disappeared, but another "boss" has come in to take the place of the old one, they cannot in reason be expected to "rise" immediately again. No community has the journalistic capacity for continuous indignation at things it cannot alter, and so, instead of rising, they remain perfectly quiet. Rising against "bosses" is really such a necessary and valuable last resort in New York that we should be sorry to see the practice fall into contempt through familiarity with it. There is very little danger that the people of New York will allow themselves to be persuaded into believing that the wild election nightmares invented by the press have any real existence. On the other hand, if the people have made up their minds to "rise" against John Kelly, rise they undoubtedly will and "hurl" him into the abyss.



> *"The indiscriminate screaming of the eagle could really gratify the American people only in their boyish days. We have got beyond that now. What the American people want is a just, sober, sensible, and dignified foreign policy."*
>
> –Carl Schurz, "A Spirited Foreign Policy," 1882

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; TAMMANY HALL, BY IRVING UNDERHILL

The Hue-and-Cry Against the Indians

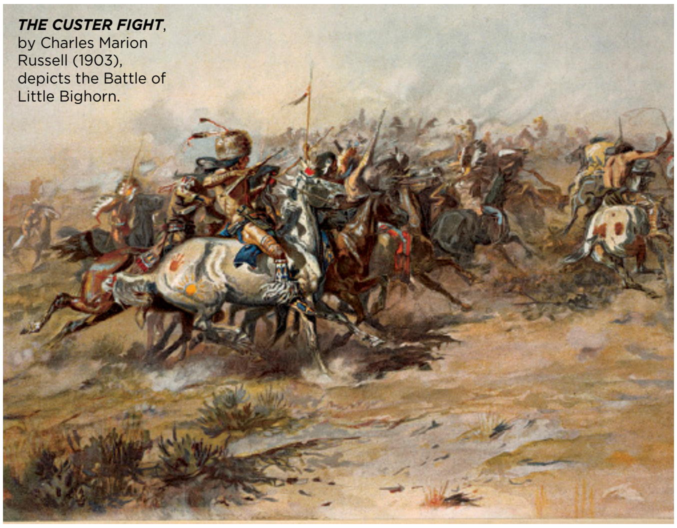
LEWIS HENRY MORGAN

JULY 20, 1876

To the Editor of *The Nation*:

The destruction of General Custer and his command must be regarded as a calamity to the Indians as well as to the nation. It precipitates anew upon the tribes concerned the awakened wrath of the American people. The press are now opening upon the Indians generally, and with a hue-and-cry in particular for the extermination of those tribes who dared to raise their hands against the gallant soldiers of the Republic, who were in the field in obedience to its commands.

But what are the facts in this case? General Custer, at the head of three hundred cavalry, rode into an Indian encampment of twenty-five hundred Indian warriors, and without preliminaries, as we must suppose, commenced an attack. He intended to rout this encampment, men, women, and children, and kill all who resisted without hesitation and without remorse. Unfortunately for General Custer and his men, they encountered the bravest and most determined Indians now living in America. They were surrounded and defeated, so that not a man escaped. They experienced the precise fate they intended for the Indians. We admire the gallantry of General Custer and his men; we mourn their loss; but who shall blame the Sioux for defending themselves, their wives and children, when attacked in their own encampment and threatened with destruction? This calamity is simply a chance of war—of a war waged by our Government upon these Indians, nothing more and nothing less.


THE CUSTER FIGHT, by Charles Marion Russell (1903), depicts the Battle of Little Bighorn.

There are some eight or ten tribes of the Sioux or Dakotas now living between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. They were forced upon the Plains from their original homes on the headwaters of the Mississippi by the advancing tide of white settlers who demanded their lands. They were thus compelled to change their country as well as their plan of life, and from settlements more or less permanent in villages to live in roving camps on the Plains. Without a supply of buffalo-meat adequate to their wants, they would perish from hunger. Such is their present condition and their precarious means of living. During the last ten years, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills attracting white settlers, the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and the constant marching of military forces and of Government exploring parties through their country, have endangered their subsistence by disturbing the wild herds of buffaloes on their ranges and turning them in other directions. This disturbance is with the Indians a matter of life and death.

The war now being prosecuted against a portion of the Dakota tribes was commenced deliberately by the Government. Before the summer is over, we may expect to hear of the destruction of the great body of these unreasoning and unreasonable Indians, who refuse to treat for the surrender of their lands upon terms they could not approve, and whose extermination may be regarded by some as a merited punishment. The good name of our country cannot bear many wars of this description.

The Sources of Communism

EDITORIAL (E.L. GODKIN)

MAY 16, 1878

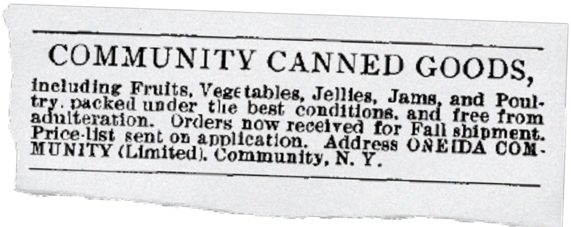
There is not a statesman in the Western World who is not at this moment puzzled and even alarmed by the discontent of that vast body of persons who live by the daily labor of their hands. It has been all but demonstrated that no traditions, or training, or peculiarities of position or government are sufficient to keep the Socialistic devil out. All the "modern improvements" seem to help him. He passes the sea and the mountains with the telegraph and the steamer, and makes as much use of the printing-press as either Church or King. He has his newspapers, his tracts and missionaries everywhere, and his vicious roar may be heard all over the Western World from the Ural to the Rocky Mountains. The worst of it is that no means of coming to terms with him has as yet been discovered. He cannot, apparently, be bought off, because after giving him what he wants Society would have nothing left.

The rich man is called on to strip himself of his riches; the frugal man of his savings; the able man to treat his ability as an incumbrance; and the whole community to give up all it loves and glories in. Smoking is to be allowed at funerals, and men and women are to mate in the streets. Children are to go to the foundling hospital. Whatever power there is anywhere is to be lodged in the hands of the most stupid and incapable. The lazy are to lie on their backs and the industrious to get nothing for their industry.

AD ARCHIVE

Oneida Community

One of America's most prominent communes advertises its wares, July 17, 1884


COMMUNITY CANNED GOODS,

including Fruits, Vegetables, Jellies, Jams, and Poultry, packed under the best conditions, and free from adulteration. Orders now received for Fall shipment. Price-list sent on application. Address ONEIDA COMMUNITY (Limited), Community, N. Y.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Execution of the Anarchists

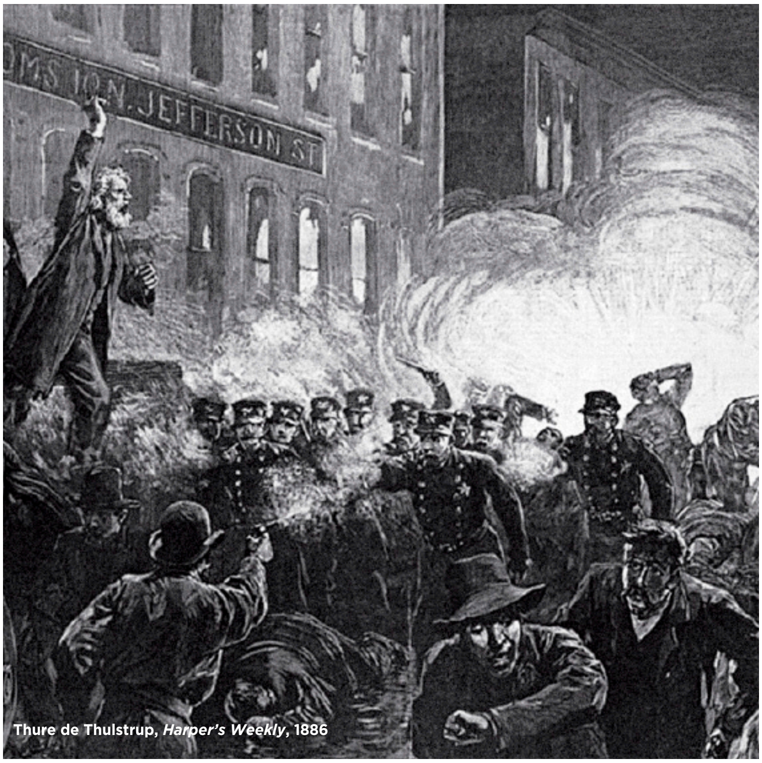
EDITORIAL (E.L. GODKIN)

November 10, 1887

It is now a year and a half since the bomb-throwing in Chicago. During the following six months people's minds were occupied with the horrors of the resulting slaughter and maiming of the police, about forty of whom were killed or disabled in the discharge of their duty, and with the devilish malignity of the attack on them. At that time nobody—not even, we think, the firmest opponents of capital punishment—ventured to suggest that there was any place in this world for the bomb-throwers, or that the removal from it of such tigers was not a solemn duty to human society.

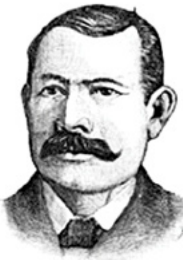
Since then, however, a good many people—some of them clergymen, some philanthropists, and some simply soft-headed people who sign all papers presented to them which do not impose pecuniary obligations—have had time to forget all about the police, and all about social security, and all about the Anarchists' teachings and aims, and are trying to get Governor Oglesby to commute the sentences of the men now awaiting execution.

Our traditional Anglo-Saxon respect for free speech is based on the assumption that public speech is always intended in free countries to persuade people into agreement with the speaker for purposes of legislation, and that the agreement aimed at is therefore a lawful one. The notion that we must tolerate speech the object of which is to induce people to break up the social organization and abolish property by force, is historically and politically absurd. The notion that we must not do whatever is necessary to prevent men's publicly recommending murder and arson, because they are sincere in thinking murder and arson good means to noble ends, is worse than absurd. It is, as we see, full of danger for everything we most value on earth.

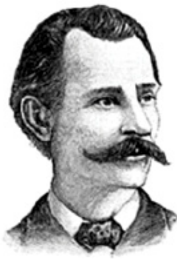


Thure de Thulstrup, *Harper's Weekly*, 1886

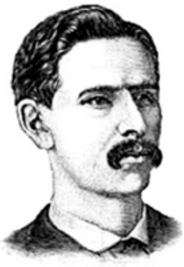
It is a great pity that we cannot shut up the mouths of the Anarchists by love. But as we cannot shut them up by love, we must do it by fear, that is, by inflicting on them the penalties which they most dread; and the one most appropriate to their case when they kill people, is death. The frantic exertions they are making just now to escape the gallows, and the joy with which they would welcome a "life sentence," shows clearly that the gallows is the punishment the case calls for. For violent incitements to murder and pillage, imprisonment will doubtless suffice; but for actual murder and pillage there is nothing likely to prove so effective a deterrent as death. Those who oppose this view can only do so successfully by maintaining that society has no right to defend its own existence, and that murder and arson are evils only when the murderer's motives are low and selfish; that if he can show that he means well, and has at heart the elevation of the poor, he should be treated with the respect due to prophets and apostles. If the propagators of these grotesque fancies only knew the encouragement they were giving to the contempt for law which makes both the rich briber and semi-barbarous lyncher the curse of American politics at present, we feel sure they would pause in their efforts to save the community the loss of the vagabonds and ruffians who are now awaiting execution at Chicago.



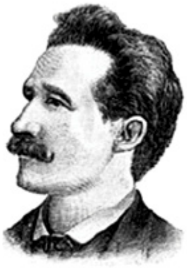
George Engel



Albert Parsons



Adolph Fischer



August Spies

Martyrs for labor: On November 11, 1887, Engel, Parsons, Fischer and Spies were hanged. The Haymarket affair inspired the growing international workers' movement.

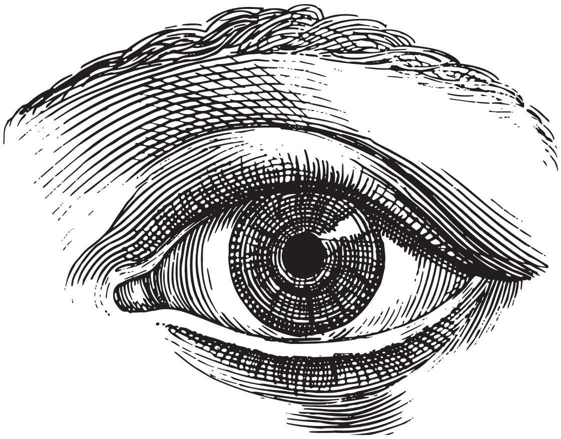
20th Anniversary Issue
[June 25, 1885]

The Nation.

5-4-1886
A labor protest in Chicago's Haymarket Square turns violent when a bomb is thrown at police.

1-17-1893
The queen of Hawaii is deposed by a group of American and European businessmen. *The Nation* calls it "a revolution on a strictly cash basis."

5-11-1894
Eugene Debs organizes a nationwide strike of Pullman Company employees. *The Nation* suggests "sending the militia to shoot them down."



The Right to Privacy

EDITORIAL (E.L. GODKIN)

DECEMBER 25, 1890

In the last number of the *Harvard Law Review* two members of the Boston bar, Messrs. Warren and Brandeis, attempt to extract from reported cases a rule of the common law which will protect individuals from the intrusion of the press on their private life: "When personal gossip attains the dignity of print, and crowds the space available for matters of real interest to the community, what wonder that the ignorant and thoughtless mistake its relative importance? Easy of comprehension, appealing to that weak side of human nature which is never wholly cast down by the misfortunes and frailties of our neighbors, no one can be surprised that it usurps the place of interest in brains capable of other things. Triviality destroys at once robustness of thought and delicacy of feeling. No enthusiasm can flourish, no generous impulse survive, its blighting influence."

The remedies they suggest are "an action…for damages in all cases, or, in the absence of special damages, substantial compensation for injury to the feelings, and in some cases an injunction," for invasions of privacy. But strong as are the arguments of our authors in support of the power of the courts to interfere, we doubt very much whether such interference would have any serious effect on the evil to be remedied, and this for two reasons.

The first is, that the legal remedy would very closely resemble that old-fashioned cure for headache caused by too much intoxicating drink—"the hair of the dog that bit you." That is to say, the man who feels outraged by publicity will, in order to stop or punish it, have to expose himself to a great deal more publicity. In order to bring his persecutors to justice, he will have to go through a process which will result in an exposure of his private affairs tenfold greater than that originally made by the offending article.

The second reason is, that there would be no effective public support or countenance for such proceedings. There is nothing democratic societies dislike so much to-day as anything which looks like what is called "exclusiveness," and all regard for or precautions about privacy are apt to be considered signs of exclusiveness. A man going into court, therefore, in defence of his privacy, would very rarely be an object of sympathy on the part either of a jury or the public.

Moreover, a very large proportion of every community nowadays dislike privacy so much for themselves that they are very unlikely to help other people to secure it. It has to struggle against the passion for notoriety on the part of obscure people—one of the strongest of social forces to-day. And it has to contend above all against the great commercial demand for scandal and gossip. The newspapers which supply this demand most plentifully are notoriously among the most valuable properties in the United States. Some of the most intelligent and respectable people in the country read them regularly, and put or leave them in the hands of their children. They form almost the only literature of hundreds of thousands of our youths, of both sexes, who leave our public schools every year. We fear there is no [cure] in either common or statute law for this most deplorable form of moral tuberculosis.

ENCOUNTER

The Passion for Notoriety

ROCHELLE GURSTEIN

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a new form of mass-circulation press entered the world, one that specialized in invasions of privacy: chatty accounts of "society" parties, weddings and honeymoons; prurient stories about broken engagements, secret marriages and divorce trials; casual reports of unwise business dealings and personal misfortunes. "The devouring publicity of life," as Henry James termed it, had become so pervasive by 1890 that Louis Brandeis and Samuel Warren, in the *Harvard Law Review*, called for the legal protection of privacy. "The press," they declared, "is overstepping in every direction the obvious bounds of propriety and of decency."

E.L. Godkin, editor of *The Nation*, had been waging war against the "vulgarity, indecency, and reckless sensationalism" of this new brand of journalism for decades, so he was eager to publicize the article and printed a lengthy excerpt with comments. He drew attention to the searing personal nature of the harm when he observed, "There is [a] certain peculiar fitness in protecting reputation or privacy against libel or intrusion by the cudgel or the horsewhip." And he set out its disastrous consequences for the public at large: such journalism deadens sensitivity to "spoken or printed ridicule, or abuse, or depreciation" and, in consequence, lessens "popular sympathy with the victim of it." Godkin identified "the passion for notoriety on the part of obscure people" as a driving force behind the public lack of sympathy for the victims of invasive journalism. Elsewhere, he described the insatiable appetite for gossip and scandal as driven by “the general desire for superiority, no matter how acquired, with which we are all consciously or unconsciously animated.” Sensational journalism was the great equalizer, lowering its victims to the same level as the reporter and readers: “The dragging down of the mighty has been not unpleasing sport to the natural man in all ages.”

Since Godkin’s time, these forces of exposure have accelerated dramatically. We now have not only twenty-four-hour news cycles of scandalmongering, but also an ever-expanding social sphere that offers undreamed-of opportunities for exhibitionists to put their private lives on display: reality shows, addiction-recovery memoirs, cancer diaries, blaring cellphone conversations in public—and, of course, the giddy, salacious forms that circulate through the Internet, the kind that led to Congressman Anthony Weiner’s downfall, among others. Such *self*-invasions of privacy testify to “the passion for notoriety on the part of obscure people,” who remain oblivious to the unsavory pleasures they provide for so many strangers.

Under these circumstances, one insight of the critics of invasive journalism remains as fresh—and as urgent—as ever: when essentially private matters are indiscriminately paraded in public, they are treated either as laughable (the jokes of late-night talk-shows) or obscene (the cellphone photos that cannot be shown on the evening news). Repeatedly, we have seen personally reckless, disgraced politicians like Bill Clinton and Eliot Spitzer return to the public sphere. But at least so far, the tone of the world we inhabit together—ever more coarse and trivial—has not proved to be so resilient.

> “*What is the reason that the American nation has not stamped out lynch law? Why not consider lynching as a form of high treason? The more aristocratic the lynchers, the swifter ought to be their conviction.*”
>
> –F.M. Noa, letter to the editor, December 5, 1895

The Yale (left) and Harvard football teams in 1894

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND YALE UNIVERSITY

The New Football

EDITORIAL

NOVEMBER 29, 1894

The critics of football last year, although much abused, had sufficient influence on the amateurs of the game to bring about a change in the rules. But the new football appears to be very like the new Tammany: “Plus on change, plus c’est la même chose.” The game on Saturday at Springfield between the two great teams of Harvard and Yale was by the testimony—unanimous, as far as our knowledge goes—of spectators and newspapers, the most brutal ever witnessed in the United States.

We respectfully ask the governing bodies of all colleges what they have to say for a game between youths presumably engaged in the cultivation of the liberal arts, which needs among its preliminaries a supply on the field of litters and surgeons? Such preparations are not only brutal but brutalizing. How any spectator, especially any woman, can witness them without a shudder, so distinctly do they recall the dueling field and the prize-ring, we are unable to understand. But that they are necessary and proper under the circumstances the result showed. There were actually seven casualties among twenty-two men who began the game. What has American culture and civilization to say to this mode of training our youth?

It may be laid down as a sound rule among civilized people, that games which may be won by disabling your adversary, or wearing out his strength, or killing him, ought to be prohibited, at all events among its youth. Swiftness of foot, skill and agility, quickness of sight, and cunning of hands, are things to be encouraged in education. The hurling of masses of highly trained athletes against one another with intent to overcome by mere weight or kicking or cuffing, without the possibility of the rigid superintendence which the referee exercises in the prize-ring, cannot fail to blunt the sensibilities of young men, stimulate their bad passions, and drown their sense of fairness. When this is done in the sight of thousands, under the stimulation of their frantic cheers and encouragement, and in full view of the stretchers which carry their fellows from the field, for aught they know, disabled for life, how, in the name of common sense, does it differ in moral influence from the Roman arena?

Help from the colleges in ending this great scandal does not seem easy to get, so keen is the competition for students, and so powerful the influence of football victories on youthful minds. We must therefore appeal to American parents to keep their sons out of the game as long as it is anything more than one of swiftness and agility.

CWA

The Communications Workers of America and the NewsGuild-CWA are proud to join this celebration of 150 years of outstanding journalism and inspiring discussion provided by *The Nation*.

The Nation raises the concerns of working families and the progressive community, and looks for answers. For 150 years, it's been a voice for labor, for fairness, for forward-thinking action. That voice is needed now more than ever.

We're proud that writers and staff at *The Nation* are members of our union. We look forward to a long partnership in the struggle for social and economic justice.

Communications Workers of America

President Larry Cohen
Secretary-Treasurer Annie Hill
NewsGuild-CWA President Bernie Lunzer

[March 31, 1898]

2-15-1898
The USS *Maine* explodes in Havana harbor, prompting an American declaration of war on Spain. "A war-ship is a curious kind of oil on troubled waters," *The Nation* had warned when the vessel sailed for Cuba.

9-14-1901
Theodore Roosevelt becomes president after William McKinley's assassination. *The Nation* loathes his jingoism and fears his inexperience.

Hawaiian Annexation

EDITORIAL (HORACE WHITE)

NOVEMBER 25, 1897

Queen Liliuokalani

The feature of the proposed annexation of Hawaii which ought to excite the most comment and the greatest repugnance has received scarcely any attention, and among the advocates of annexation none at all. This is the fact that the American republic, based upon the doctrine that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, proposes to change the government of a distant country without asking the consent of the governed in any way whatever. Does this betoken a change in ourselves? So it would seem.

That Senator Morgan of Alabama should argue this question as though the people of Hawaii have no rights which white men are bound to respect, is not to be wondered at. He is an ex-slave-holder. He belongs to a class who are in office by virtue of suppressing the votes of the black men and also of such whites as do not vote their ticket. Free suffrage has been abolished in Alabama and in several other Southern States, and one of the most solemn questions that confront the American public today is how to purify the ballot and secure a fair count in those States.

They began with cheating the negro. They have ended by cheating each other. It is easy to understand how men who believe in this system should ride rough-shod over the rights of the Hawaiians, how they should treat the question of annexation as though those rights were non-existent, and talk about England and Japan, and naval power in the Pacific, and every other conceivable thing except the foundation principle of free government. Being accustomed to trample upon it at home, they cannot be expected to see its virtues in the distant Pacific. But that the liberty-loving North, and especially the Republican party, which fought a war to establish this principle, and contended for thirty years after the war to maintain it, should now join in trampling upon it, is something that would not have been believed by any former generation of Americans.

ENCOUNTER

Imperialism's First Fruits

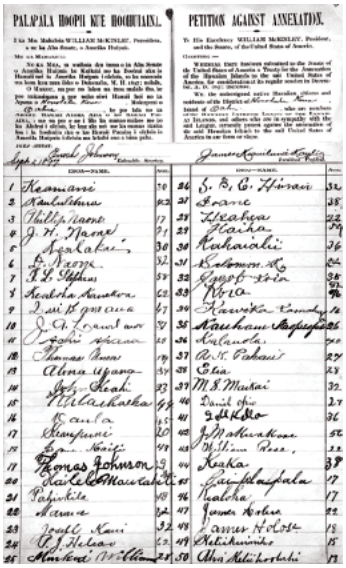
ELINOR LANGER

However improbable it seems today, the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii was the central American foreign-policy issue of its time. In late 1897, Queen Liliuokalani, the monarch deposed by American-led businessmen in 1893, was in Washington, DC, where, together with a delegation of native leaders, she presented petitions against the pending annexation treaty between the United States and Hawaii to members of Congress who opposed overseas expansion. In the fourth year of her protest against the American role in the coup, the queen had already experienced the feints and dodges of American politics and diplomacy many times, but there was still hope that her country's independence might be preserved.

In the past few months, Hawaiians had come together in passionate gatherings to hear their leaders cry out that annexation would be like being "buried alive." "We…earnestly protest against the annexation of the…Hawaiian islands to the…United States of America in any form or shape," their petitions read. The 38,000 signatures reflected the will of the vast majority of native Hawaiians alive at the time. Perhaps with the able Hawaiian representatives delivering their case in person, enough opinions would be swayed to consolidate the position of the anti-imperialist forces so that the movement toward annexation could be stopped.

But that is not how it happened, of course. When the Hawaiians left Washington in the winter of 1898, it appeared that the two-thirds Senate majority required to annex the islands by treaty could not be found. They returned home relieved—only to find the next summer that by the devious tactic of a joint congressional resolution requiring only a simple majority in both houses, Hawaii had nonetheless become "ours," as it has been in one form or another ever since. When it became the fiftieth state in 1959, the question "Shall Hawaii immediately be admitted into the Union as a State?"—as opposed to remaining a territory—was the only option on the ballot.

What changed the fate not only of Hawaii but of the United States and, indeed, the world? The Spanish-American War. Before our 1898 intervention in the Cuban war for independence from Spain, we were a republic. After the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war and brought some Spanish territories under US control, we were an empire. Before, we were a single people whose values and institutions were applicable mainly to ourselves. After, we were



PALAPALA HOOPII KUE HOOHUIAINA.

PETITION AGAINST ANNEXATION.

To His Excellency WILLIAM McKINLEY, President, and the Senate, of the United States of America.

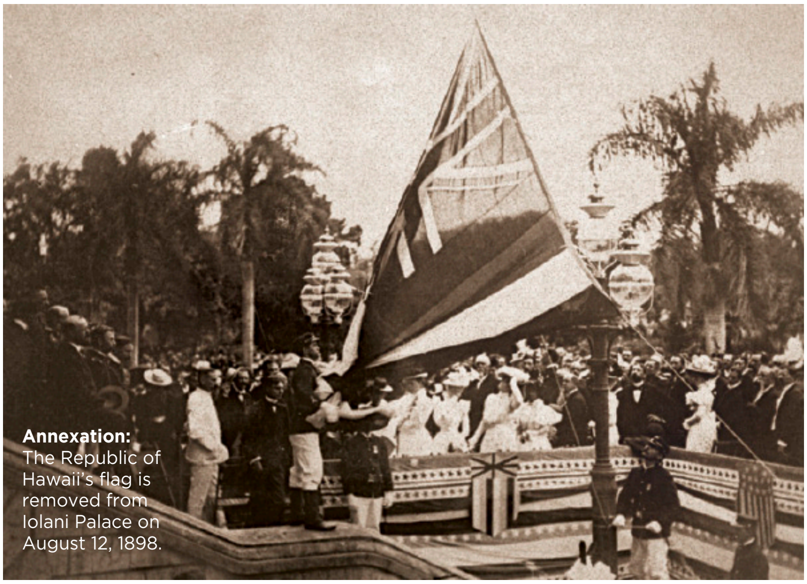
This 1897 petition, circulated by the Hawaiian Patriotic League, led Congress to temporarily block the annexation of Hawaii by the United States.

PHOTOS: LEFT, CARE OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES; ABOVE, AP

a collection of diverse unwilling peoples on whose histories and aspirations those values and institutions would have to be imposed. In addition to Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam were now also "ours."

The consequences of this shift for the tenor of public life are well captured in two *Nation* editorials. "Hawaiian Annexation," published on November 25, 1897, is about principles, particularly the right of a people to the government of its own choosing. Lofty, rhetorical and a little abstract, it is a sermon against the hypocrisy that enabled annexationists to ignore an inconvenient truth: "that the American republic, based upon the doctrine that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, proposes to change the government of a distant country without asking the consent of the governed in any way whatever."

"The Situation in the Philippines," which ran on August 16, 1900, seems the more telling today. The later editorial is about power: what happens when you try to force your government on people who prefer their own. It is urgent, particular, not part of the periodicals' gentlemanly wars but rather the real thing: a report from a new grim world. Based not on the ruminations of a writer in New York but on the observations of a correspondent in the field, the editorial gives the lie to the official view that "the situation is that of tolerably complete conquest," noting: "The armed natives are now called…'robbers,' and 'bandits.' There are no more battles, but nearly every day there are fights in which the Americans lose one or more, and the natives one hundred or more. After one of these fights a report is issued that a band of robbers has been destroyed; but before many days another fight occurs in the same region." We have been hearing such news ever since.



Annexation: The Republic of Hawaii's flag is removed from Iolani Palace on August 12, 1898.

Before the Spanish-American War, we were a republic. After, we became an empire.

We have been hearing, too, about torture. Its use in the Philippines was so well known that an illustration on the cover of *Life* showed US soldiers, surrounded by watchful Europeans, subduing a Filipino with a water bucket. "Those pious Yankees can't throw stones at us anymore," the caption read. With the Philippine dead estimated at 30,000 at the time of the writing—200,000 people died from associated causes by the end—it would seem that the Hawaiians, who were merely "annexed," got off lightly, but they too were watchful. The acquisition of Hawaii was accomplished through politics, not through arms, but the same men who overthrew the kingdom in the first place were now running it on behalf of the United States. "[W]e are surprised that the 'water cure' has not yet been advocated for the Hawaiian Islands," commented a native newspaper, only in part facetiously. "Perhaps [the ruling clique] ought to see to it that during the next electoral campaign the 'water cure' incidental to the 'benevolent assimilation' policy be administered to the natives who refuse to vote the white-missionary ticket."

Surprising, too, is that despite the *Nation* editors' consistent opposition to empire while it was looming, they seem to have underestimated its implications when it became fact. Bursting with pride over a period that included a congressional investigation of the Philippine war and the disciplining of some of the blood-lusty officers who carried out the atrocities, the chipper 1902 editorial "The Pesky Anti-Imperialist" attributes these brief political victories to the anti-imperialist outcry, but offers no intimations of the larger moral casualties ahead. The movement succeeded because "anti-Imperialism is only another name for old-fashioned Americanism," the editorial maintains. Unwilling to "distinguish between the flag and the principles which first set the flag flying," the anti-imperialist American has reasserted the fundamental ideals of the Declaration of Independence, and in the end his cause has triumphed.

It is hard not to envy those pesky anti-imperialists, so much closer than we are today to the spirit and even the lineage of the founding fathers. The senator who received the Hawaiian petitions from Queen Liliuokalani had six forebears who fought at Concord, and one who actually signed the Declaration of Independence. When the editorialist invoked John Quincy Adams, he could be sure that the reader would recall Adams's warning that if the United States became involved in foreign intrigues, "the fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force." And the optimism! There is not even any particular hurry. Remembering "that the history of success is the history of minorities," the anti-imperialist "is content to bide his time, knowing that the road of popular persuasion is a long one, though sure in the end." To that we can only say: "Ouch!"

When *The Nation*'s editors defined "anti-imperialism" as synonymous with "Americanism," they neglected to notice that not only "Americanism" but America itself had already forever changed.

"No reflecting person needs to be informed that war is the rich man's opportunity and the poor man's calamity, that it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, and that no absurder mode of reconciling the two classes could be proposed."

–Wendell Phillips Garrison, "Sentimental Jingoism," December 19, 1895

1903

W.E.B. Du Bois publishes *The Souls of Black Folk*, which *The Nation*'s reviewer calls "almost intolerably sad."

PHOTOS: W.E.B. DU BOIS, NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES / AP; ABOVE, HAWAII STATE ARCHIVE / AP

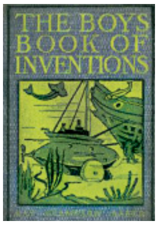
An Interesting Book for Inactive Boys

Review of The Boy's Book of Inventions, *by Ray Stannard Baker*

CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE

OCTOBER 19, 1899

Here is a fairly good book for boys, telling about automobiles, tall buildings, the new kites, the phonograph, wireless telegraphy, liquid air, and the Roentgen rays—subjects ranging from those whose principles are obvious for every boy, to those which must remain mysteries in his mind; from those which depend upon no new knowledge, but only upon new economic conditions, to those which have startled the scientific world. Mr. Baker has made his book entertaining. He has not loaded it down with information. On the contrary, it must be an inactive-minded boy who is satisfied with what he finds here: The question of dollars and cents is brought to the focus of attention. The purpose seems to be to turn the boy's love of the marvelous to account in order to impress him with conceptions of the great science of economy. Mechanical contrivances, his natural delight, are kept scrupulously out of view. Purely scientific matters are apparently not deemed important enough to call for any great accuracy of statement.



It would have been perfectly possible without making the book any the less entertaining, to have given it a high value for the boy's growing understanding of the scientific points involved in the different inventions, so that he should treasure and cherish it more and more with advancing years. A book after a boy's own heart, it is not quite, though a boy will be glad enough to get and read it. The illustrations are interesting and extravagant.

Botticelli's Illustrations to the *Divina Commedia*

BERNARD BERENSON

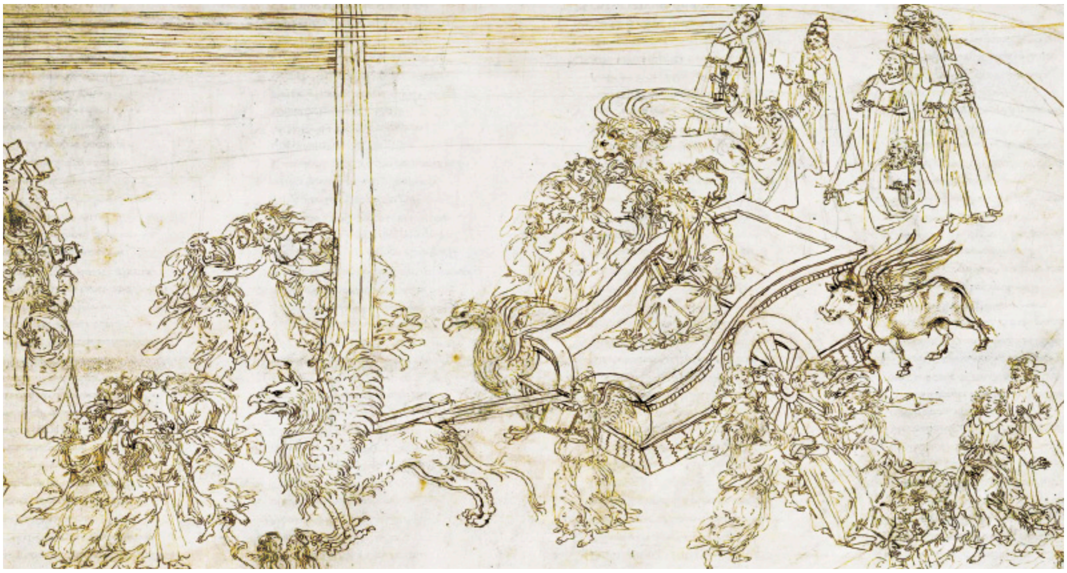


ILLUSTRATION OF PURGATORY BY SANDRO BOTTICELLI

NOVEMBER 12, 1896

Dante does not lend himself to illustration; and, even if he did, Botticelli was not the man for the task. Then, pray, what is the value of these drawings? The answer is simple. Their value consists in their being drawings by Botticelli, not at all in their being drawings for Dante. And at this point the honest showman should warn the public that a drawing by Botticelli is something very peculiar. It does not so much as attempt to be correct; it is not a faithful reproduction of anything whatsoever. A hundred "artist-journalists" now at work publish daily drawings which are far more exact, more lifelike, more clever, and more brilliant than any you will find in Botticelli's designs for the *Commedia*. His real place as a draughtsman is not among great Europeans, but with the great Chinese and Japanese, with Ririomin, Haronobu, and Hokusai. Like these, he is a supreme master of the single line. He gives it a swiftness and a purity which in the whole world of sensation find their analogy only in some few ecstatic notes of the violin, or in the most crystalline *timbre* of the soprano voice. His universe was of the simplest. It consisted of things that could and of things that could not furnish themes for rhapsodies in swift, pure lines. Dante happened to find himself among the blessed in this simple division, hence Botticelli chose him as a subject for his art. These illustrations required of our artist no coloring—with him always an afterthought—and scarcely any stereotyped composition. Here he could be free as nowhere else, and here, therefore, we see him in his most unadulterated form. The value of these drawings consists in their being the most spontaneous product of the greatest master of the single line that our modern Western world has yet possessed.

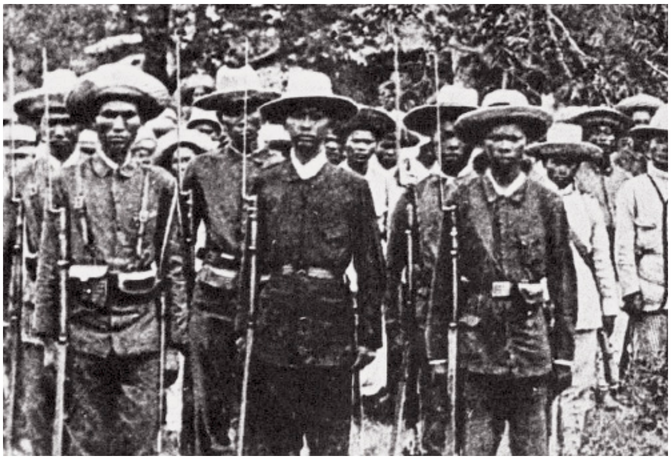
The Situation in the Philippines

EDITORIAL (D.M. MEANS)

August 16, 1900

The people of this country take but a languid interest in the Filipinos. Events in China now engage our attention, and the excitement of a Presidential campaign will soon exclude all other interests.

In the island of Luzon, there are 216 separate [US] garrisons, holding cities and villages in the twenty-seven provinces. A battalion of soldiers can now move from one of these points to another without meeting any effective resistance, and in some regions without meeting any resistance at all. In this sense the island is pacified, and there are no more "insurgents." The armed natives are now called "ladrones," "robbers," and "bandits." There are no more battles, but nearly every day there are fights in which the Americans lose one or more, and the natives one hundred or more. Nevertheless, everything is quiet, according to the official statement. The mass of the people, it is claimed, desire American rule, but are unable to resist the small but pestilent minority, who tyrannize over them. Even with the aid of our army, the great majority of the people are unable to resist these robber bands, and reluctantly supply them with all the food and money that they need.



Filipino guerrilla fighters: "The expansionists have begun to threaten us with 'chaos' if [we] stop killing people with machine-guns in the Philippines," *The Nation* wrote in March 1899. "What are we doing but establishing chaos and carrying it on as a sort of business in which we are proud to excel?"

Officially viewed, the situation is that of tolerably complete conquest. But the official view does not cover all the facts. Whenever a small force of Americans undertakes an expedition, the woods and hills become alive with enemies.

The theory that these bands terrorize the whole population has no support in facts. The American troops have done the terrorizing. Their conduct in some actions has been so ferocious, and their revenge in many cases so terrible, as to make them dreaded and hated. The natives submit to the Americans because they are afraid of them; they secretly support the "ladrones" because they are their relatives and friends, and because they sympathize with them in their resistance. Our rule is detested; and there is no reason why it should not continue to be so.

The sole defence of the slaughter of the Filipinos offered by those Americans who defend our course on moral grounds, is that we are relieving a friendly and peaceful population from the oppression of robber bands. What evidence supports this theory? How many Filipinos are killed by these bandits, and how many by our soldiers? By whom has most property been destroyed? The proof is overwhelming that we are forcing our rule on a sullen and reluctant people, by methods which will make us hated for generations. We have killed perhaps 30,000 Filipinos. Their children and relatives and friends do not love us for it. They are denounced for failing to appreciate our benevolent intentions; but since they do fail, our justification also fails.

The Pesky Anti-Imperialist

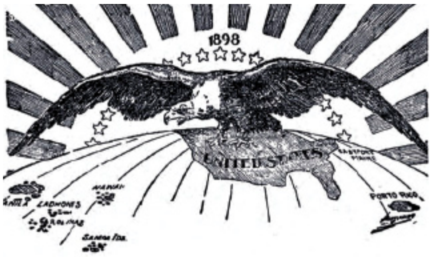
EDITORIAL (ROLLO OGDEN)

May 8, 1902

It is most provoking, we know, for Anti-Imperialists to pretend that they are still alive. They have been killed so often. After 1899 we were to hear no more of them. In 1900 they were again pronounced dead. Last year the slain were slaughtered once more, and that time buried as well, with all due ceremony. Yet the impudent creatures have resumed activity during the past few months just as if their epitaphs had not been composed again and again.

The worst of it is that they seem to have acquired a strange power over the public and over Government. What the lonely and ridiculous Anti-Imperialist was whispering in the closet, a year ago, thousands are now shouting from the housetops. How to account for it? Imperialist editors and statesmen are puzzled. Their despised and helpless opponents are actually swaying the policy of the Government! It is absurd, of course, really quite preposterous, but there stands the fact. It is all very fine to make merry at the expense of wrong-headed people who get in the way of national progress, but how if they succeed? Prodigiously unreasonable, truly disgusting to the well-ordered mind of the Imperialist; but what is the explanation?

Very simple, cocksure brothers of the Empire, we assure you. All you have to do is to remember that Anti-Imperialism is only another name for old-fashioned Americanism, and all will be clear to you. An American who has a settled body of convictions, as to which he is ready to speak out at a moment's notice; who with his inherited ideas has an inherited courage, an inherited love of equality and of justice; who has also a sense of humor which cannot be imposed upon by Uncle Sam masquerading in Louis Quatorze garments. It is simply his Americanism that makes him think and act as he does.



10,000 miles from tip to tip

This is what makes the Anti-Imperialist so pesky—he is American to the core. He has fed on his country's tradition. With him, justice does not depend upon the color of a man's skin. He cannot distinguish between the flag and the principles which first set the flag flying. He believes that the Declaration of Independence is the very Alcoran of American political doctrine. And he does not in the least mind being in a minority. He remembers that the history of success is the history of minorities.

1905-1915 [1 of 2]

50th Anniversary Issue
[July 8, 1915]

8-31-1910: Theodore Roosevelt unveils his "New Nationalism" program in Osawatomie, Kansas. *The Nation* hopes that "the old-time American sturdiness and common sense have still sufficient vitality to throw off this pseudo-socialist virus."

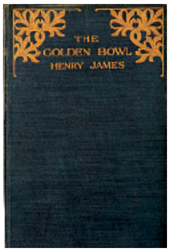
2-17-1913 The Armory Show opens in New York City. "Something like a new thing has been found under the sun," Frank Jewett Mather writes in *The Nation*, "even if the newness turns out to derive from such venerable sources as excessive boredom, ignorant self-assertiveness, or over-ingenious pursuit of novelty and notoriety."

Too Much and Too Little

Review of The Golden Bowl, *by Henry James*

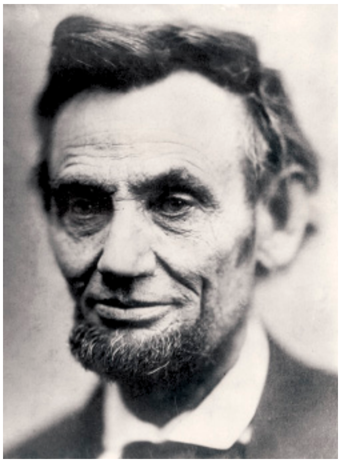
ANNIE R.M. LOGAN

January 26, 1905



The story contained in *The Golden Bowl* is elaborately concealed. It is involved, swathed, smothered in many obscurities, obscurities inseparable from the author's method of presenting an inside and outside and all-round view; obscurities arising from excessive use of extended metaphor, from saying too much and saying too little, even from sentences too complex and too elliptical, too long and too short. To get the story you must pay the price, must attack and overcome the obscurities; and whether this be done in a spirit of happy satisfaction of delight in the obscurities for their own sake, or of irritation, or of mere plodding determination to stick and pull through, in the end you have your reward—a story, a situation, which, as you think about it, pierces the obscurities and strikes you in the eyes, like the low red autumn sun pushing out of a mass of black clouds.

It is a story short and bitter. No one but Mr. James could tell it in English without grossness and vulgarity, without challenging our prejudices and prepossessions, without making us all out to be, in his estimate, not better than the French—a state of things we should have to have forced upon our notice. And he doesn't literally tell the story; he only examines witnesses, comments on testimony, infers and speculates prodigiously, leaving us free to make what we can of the case, to grasp or miss its facts and its wide significance, according to our capacity for independent mental operations. To rehearse the facts is perhaps the most useful part a reviewer can play between Mr. James and the public. The facts at the bottom of *The Golden Bowl* glare when you have found them.



The Negro Problem

EDITORIAL (OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD)

February 18, 1909

That there are discouragements enough in our national attitude toward the negro forty-four years after Lincoln's death, cannot be denied. No one who took part in the celebration at Springfield, Illinois, last week can forget that but a year ago innocent negroes were butchered in the streets there because they were negroes. In the steady filching of the negro's political rights, we tend to revert to that condition of half-slave, half-free which Lincoln declared to be intolerable. He would, we believe, be the first to say that a native-born, educated—and often property-owning—American who is deprived of the ballot is defenseless before his enemies; and he would find illustrations without number to prove his contention. For Lincoln to see those same poor black creatures who swarmed about him when he reached Richmond after its fall, whose pathetic, hysterical joy over their savior from slavery he curbed with wise and kindly advice—to see these fellow-citizens now set apart in trains, street cars, and all public places, by an iron caste, would appall the greatest apostle of democracy.

Appall, but not discourage. When to his disappointment in 1856 but two persons came to the mass-meeting he had called at Springfield to ratify the Illinois anti-Nebraska Convention of 1856, he heartened himself by saying: "Under all this seeming want of life and motion the world does move, nevertheless. Be hopeful and now let us adjourn and appeal to the people." So must those who to-day work in his spirit, so must the negroes themselves, appeal to the people in whose hearts still resides that sense of justice in which Lincoln never lost faith.

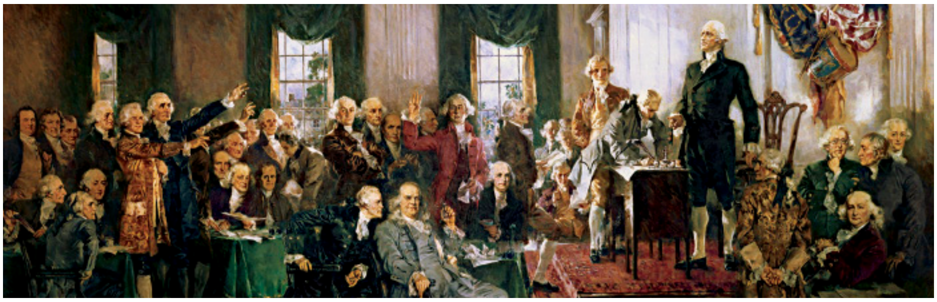
We wish the Lincoln celebration might have been marked by some great step forward for the colored people, not merely the endowment of this college or that hospital, but the creation by some of our philanthropists of a great fund, the income of which might be used for the intelligent help and guidance of the race. Why build a Lincoln boulevard from Washington to Gettysburg when money might be spent in ways far more useful and more grateful to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln?

> *"Dynasties may crumble before all is done; empires change their form of government. But whatever happens, Europe—humanity—will not settle back again into a position enabling three Emperors to give, on their individual choice or whim, the signal for destruction and massacre."*
>
> –Rollo Ogden, "The Responsibility for War," August 6, 1914

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Muckraking the Fathers

EDITORIAL (SIMEON STRUNSKY)



SCENE AT THE SIGNING OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY, 1940

JANUARY 21, 1915

Radical thought some time ago came into possession of a new pocket-knife. It is called "the economic interpretation of history," and the havoc it has wrought among fine old parlor furniture is a caution. There is a document known as the United States Constitution which people were in the habit of referring to with extreme deference. We know to-day that the Constitution is a scheme devised by a land-holding and rum-selling oligarchy for the enslavement of a democracy. There was a group of people and an epoch commonly described as the Fathers. We know to-day that they were not parents to be proud of. There was a war known as the War of Independence, reputed to have been fought by patriots. We know to-day that it was a war fought for privilege by tax-dodgers. George Washington, a land-speculator; Hancock, a smuggler; Robert Morris, a bond-scalper—it has been a busy little pocket-knife.

But the parallel with the small boy is not perfect. The small boy chips and slashes without animus, whereas radical thought and radical youth hack away at the past in a frenzy. Once upon a time the radical thinker was not much concerned with the Past; it was dead and did not matter. But in fighting the battles of the present the Radical discovers that the past does matter; it is not dead; its heavy hand lies on us and the roots of our thoughts and actions run back through the centuries. The Fathers in their graves stand in the way of a great many desirable things of the present. Therefore they must be shown up. The movement once under way, impetus does the rest. There ensues a chronic state of irritation with the past, a chronic suspicion that the past was just the opposite of what patriotic sentiment has usually pictured.

It is all the more curious that the present-day revolutionist should be so merciless to the past when one considers how fatally the same interpretation can be applied to his own case. If the American Revolution was fought for land-grabbing and crooked finance, if the Protestant Revolution was merely an expropriation of the Church, if the French Revolution was an assault on ecclesiastical revenues, what will prevent the historian of the year 2050 from describing the social uplift movement of 1915 as primarily engineered by young men and young women of the middle classes in search of jobs as investigators and research directors, and the Socialist party as made up of lazy factory hands, grafting walking delegates, and ambitious lawyers?

ENCOUNTER

Twilight of the Idols

RICHARD KREITNER

What Einstein did for physics, Joyce for literature, Picasso for painting, Charles A. Beard did for the study of American history. Our government was designed not by a brotherhood of selfless guardians of the common weal, Beard argued in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913), but by a cabal of the fabulously rich. They hastened to Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 not to solemnize "the union of freedom with strength and order," as the received wisdom had it then (and, less excusably, often has it now), but to protect their own power and property and privilege and prestige. "The direct, impelling motive" for the adoption of the Constitution, Beard concluded, "was the economic advantages which the beneficiaries expected would accrue to themselves first, from their action."

That reappraisal shattered American complacency about the past and, by implication, about the present and future as well. What hope could there be for "square deals" with a deck stacked in favor of the house? Two years later, Simeon Strunsky was still reeling, complaining in these pages (which then catered to scholars and gentlemen) that someone had been messing around with the "fine old parlor furniture." Despite his objections, the parlor has been in disarray ever since.

Long forgotten, Strunsky was a prolific and brilliant satirist—he was literary editor of *The Nation*'s then-parent publication, the *New York Evening Post*—whose witty conservatism soon mellowed into a bland celebration of all things middle-of-the-road. Naturally, he found a home at the editorial pages of *The New York Times*. But twenty-five years later, Strunsky was still trying to neutralize the challenge Beard had posed. "If in the conquest of a Continent it turns out that there has always been what our candid vocabulary today calls pillage and speculation and land-grabbing," Strunsky wrote in *The Living Tradition* (1939), "it puts in better light the pillagers of any one period."

Liberals today ridicule the Tea Party's crude take on American history—which Strunsky's words evoke—as obviously bowdlerized and wrong. But *An Economic Interpretation* shows why it is no accident that Constitution-worship has always been the first and last resort of homegrown scoundrels. "The system isn't broken. It's fixed," read a sign at last year's racial-justice protests. Charles Beard will be there waiting should "radical thought and radical youth" summon the courage to interrogate that last great golden calf: the legitimacy of the Union itself.

150 YEARS

THE NATION AND THE NATION

Radicals, rebels, poets, pioneers, feminists, fantasists and other voices from our hidden history

Freedom's Song

Over The Nation*'s 150-year history, each new generation of radicals and reformers has contested the promise—and the meaning—of freedom.*

ERIC FONER

FROM *THE NATION*'S VERY INCEPTION, THE IDEA OF FREEDOM HAS been fundamental to its political outlook. Of course, freedom (along with its twin, liberty) has long occupied a central place in Americans' political vocabulary. Yet despite—or perhaps because of—its ubiquity, freedom is an idea whose meaning is always contested, always in flux. *The Nation*'s 150-year history exemplifies how successive generations of reformers and radicals (themselves ever-changing categories) have thought about freedom and how the concept has expanded over time to include more and more Americans and more and more realms of life. Ideas central to *The Nation*'s understanding of freedom today—economic justice, civil liberties, anti-imperialism, political democracy, racial equality and personal autonomy—are deeply rooted in one or another era of the magazine's past.

The Nation was born in July 1865, shortly after the end of the Civil War, a conflict that transformed the meaning of American freedom. The journal's founders included prominent Northern abolitionists. In a country rhetorically dedicated to freedom but substantially grounded in slavery, the abolitionist movement pioneered the notion of freedom as a universal birthright, a truly human ideal. Principles such as birthright citizenship and equal protection under the law without regard to race, which would later become cornerstones of American freedom, were products of the antislavery crusade. Soon after *The Nation* came into existence, they were written into the Constitution. The magazine's very name reflected a new identification, spawned by the war, of the American nation-state with the progress of freedom. Thanks to the abolition of slavery, a powerful federal government, once widely feared as a danger to individual liberty, now appeared, in the words of the abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner, as the "custodian of freedom."

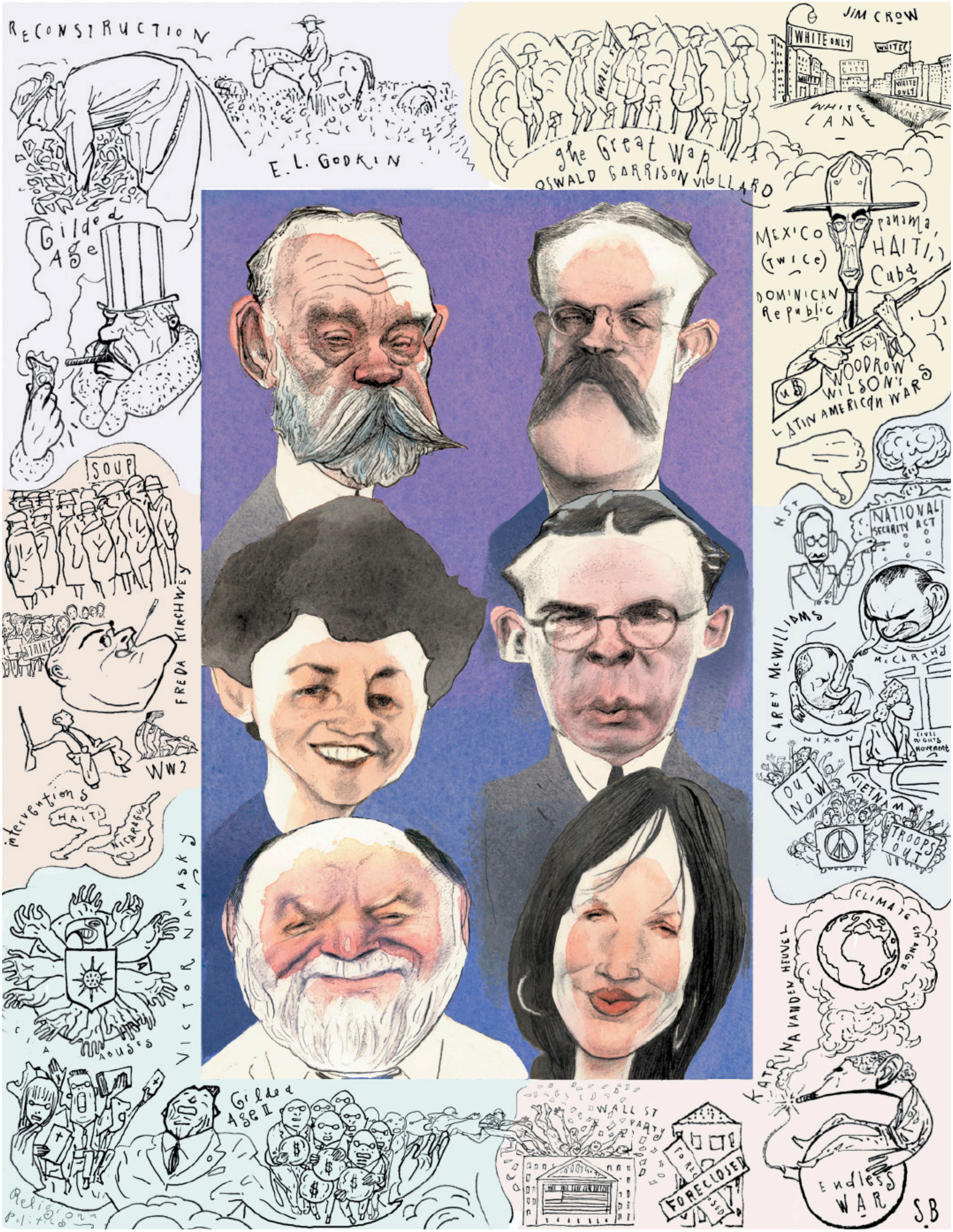
> **By the 1890s, *The Nation*, created by one generation of reformers, was out of touch with the next—social thinkers critical of laissez-faire dogma and sympathetic to organized labor.**

The Nation's primary audience was the reform-minded Northern middle class, solidly committed to the classic principles of nineteenth-century Anglo-American liberalism—not only antislavery, but also free trade, free public education, civil-service reform and an absence of governmental restraints on individual liberty. The editor, the Anglo-Irish journalist E.L. Godkin, who determined the magazine's course until the turn of the century, never wavered from these beliefs. Increasingly, however, as American society changed, these views made him more and more conservative. *The Nation*'s first issue proclaimed that the Civil War marked a momentous turning point in "the great strife between the few and the many, between privilege and equality, between law and power." But as time went on, Godkin positioned the magazine on the side of the few, of privilege and of power.

The first indication of this transition was *The Nation*'s abandonment of the cause of the former slaves. *The Nation*'s prospectus listed among its priorities the "removal of all artificial distinctions" between blacks and the rest of society. Yet while Godkin initially supported granting the right to vote to male former slaves, he quickly succumbed to white-supremacist propaganda that depicted biracial Reconstruction governments in the South as travesties of democracy. He became persuaded that the former slaves were unfit for political participation. By the 1880s and 1890s, all semblance of compassion for African-Americans had disappeared from *The Nation*'s pages. Godkin expressed sympathy for Southern efforts to disenfranchise black voters, supporting poll taxes and literacy tests for voting "if honestly enforced" in a nonracial manner, which, of course, they were not.

Godkin was equally alarmed by the rise of a militant labor movement in the North and its demand for laws limiting the hours of labor. Increasingly, *The Nation* saw the democratic state itself as a threat to individual liberty. Godkin insisted that the market, not politics, was the true realm of freedom, which he defined as "the liberty to buy and sell…where, when, and how we please," without government interference. Efforts to use the state to uplift the less fortunate were doomed to failure. Those at the top of society deserved to be there, since they were, by definition, the fittest. This was the language of Social Darwinism, whose leading American proponent, William Graham Sumner, became a *Nation* contributor.

By the 1890s, *The Nation*, created by one generation of reformers, was out of touch with the next—social thinkers critical of laissez-faire dogma and sympathetic to organized labor. As the economist Henry Carter Adams observed in 1894, "The New York Nation is a decided Bourbon. Its editors have learned nothing during the last twenty-five years." Adams spoke for the "new liberalism" that emerged on both sides of the Atlantic in the late nineteenth century and flourished during the Progressive era, when reformers demanded greater governmental regulation of the economy and a more


RECONSTRUCTION
E.L. GODKIN
Gilded Age
The Great War
WALL ST
OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD
JIM CROW
WHITE ONLY
WHITE
WHITE CITY
WHITE ONLY
WHITE LANE
BLACK LANE
MEXICO (TWICE)
Panama,
HAITI,
Cuba
DOMINICAN Republic
WOODROW WILSON'S LATIN AMERICAN WARS
SOUP
STRIKE
FREDA KIRCHWEY
WW2
interventions
HAITI
NICARAGUA
H.S.T.
NATIONAL SECURITY ACT
CAREY McWILLIAMS
McCARTHY
NIXON
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
OUT NOW
VIETNAM
TROOPS OUT
VICTOR NAVASKY
CIA ABUSES
CLIMATE CHANGE
KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL
Endless WAR
Religion in Politics
Gilded Age II
WALL ST PARTY
FORECLOSED
FORECLOSED
S.B.

STEVE BRODNER

positive and collective definition of freedom. *The Nation* had little to say on these subjects. In the early twentieth century, its editor, Paul Elmer More, an erudite literary critic who had studied Sanskrit, Greek and Latin at Harvard, offered cautious support to some progressive legislation, such as the income tax (which Godkin had vehemently opposed), but focused the magazine on literary commentary rather than politics.

In the Progressive era, the revitalized labor movement insisted that in an age of corporate capitalism and widespread inequality, the concept of economic freedom needed redefinition. Progressive reformers argued that in a modern economy, "industrial freedom" for ordinary Americans meant not so much property ownership as economic security. To achieve this, laissez-faire was inadequate. Freedom required the ability of workers to organize collectively to advance their interests, and government action to create an economic floor beneath which no citizen would be allowed to sink. Such thinking remained alien to *The Nation*, which insisted in 1910 that "Any scheme of regulation which would prevent poverty would be equally subversive of liberty." It was left to *The New Republic*, founded in 1914, to become Progressivism's leading journalistic voice.

IN ONE REALM, *THE NATION* UNDER MORE DID break with Godkin's legacy. The latter had been skeptical of the ability of immigrants to take part in American democracy. In keeping with enlightened Progressive thought, however, *The Nation* repudiated the nativist upsurge sparked by the era's immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. In 1915, it carried Horace Kallen's essay "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," which rejected the idea of forced assimilation in favor of cultural pluralism.

The real break with *The Nation*'s past, however, came in 1918, when Oswald Garrison Villard—who had inherited ownership of the magazine in 1900 from his father, the railroad magnate Henry Villard—took over as editor, a position he occupied until 1932. He made *The Nation* livelier, more controversial and more radical. It quickly became what it has remained ever since: a voice demanding far-reaching social change in the name of greater freedom. Villard emphatically rejected the magazine's traditional commitment to government nonintervention as the essence of liberty. The "widest possible freedom," he wrote, required "social control in the common interest." *The Nation* called on the "friends of freedom" to embrace the revolutions that swept Europe in the wake of World War I, defended labor's right to organize, and advocated the "democratization of industry."

Oswald Garrison Villard made *The Nation* what it has remained ever since: a voice demanding far-reaching social change in the name of greater freedom.

TESTIMONIALS

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

1940

I think no one would ever accuse *The Nation* of seeking to become a popular organ. It has, through its long history, often appeared to stand alone. It does not matter whether one agrees with *The Nation* or not. The important thing is that everywhere and always—particularly in a democracy—minorities shall have a means of expressing themselves, and *The Nation*, we all know, has often represented minority opinion and mighty unpopular minority opinion at that.

If Villard brought *The Nation* to a belated embrace of Progressivism in economic policy, the magazine also embraced two stances, neglected by most Progressive reformers, that would become central to liberalism later in the twentieth century. One was racial equality. A grandson of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and a founder of the NAACP, Villard viewed racial justice as essential to the fulfillment of the promise of American democracy. He revived *The Nation*'s original commitment to eradicating inequality for blacks. Villard voted for Woodrow Wilson in 1912 but quickly denounced Wilson's segregationist racial policies. *The Nation* consistently spoke out against lynching and supported efforts to secure a federal law criminalizing the practice.

Villard's other preoccupation was civil liberties. Most Progressives, entranced by the ways the democratic state could promote the public good, had evinced little interest in the rights of dissenters; the battle for free speech had been led by marginal groups like "free love" advocates and the Industrial Workers of the World. But massive repression during World War I gave birth to a new recognition of the importance of civil liberties. In 1918, *The Nation* itself saw an issue banned from the mails, for the curious reason that it criticized the government's choice of Samuel Gompers to represent American labor at a conference in Europe (Gompers being far too close to the Wilson administration for Villard's taste). The following year, an editorial on freedom of speech proclaimed that "it is the men who are denying that right, and not the Socialists and I. W. W.'s, who are the most dangerous enemies of the social order to-day."

In 1923, under the heading "Sweet Land of Liberty," *The Nation* detailed the degradation of American freedom: the refusal to allow two socialists to speak in Pennsylvania, the arrest of 400 IWW members in California, the beating by Columbia University students of a graduate student who had written a letter to the university's daily newspaper defending freedom of speech and the press. From World War I to the present, *The Nation* has identified freedom of expression as an essential hallmark of American freedom, and has highlighted and condemned violations of this principle.

In addition, thanks to Freda Kirchwey, who joined the staff in 1918, the magazine during the 1920s published pioneering articles on sexual freedom, birth control, divorce laws and the sexual double standard. It thus anticipated the more recent extension of the claims of freedom from a set of public entitlements into the arenas of family life, social and sexual relations, and gender roles. Overall, wrote the journalist Heywood Broun, "a curious piece of casting" had made Villard, the son of a robber baron, "head…of the most effective rebel periodical in America."

In 1932, Villard retired as editor; Kirchwey soon succeeded him. *The Nation* quickly emerged as a strong supporter of the New Deal; if it criticized FDR, it was because it felt his response to the Depression was inadequate, not least in the area of racial justice. But it continued to insist that government power was crucial to the enjoyment of individual freedom. During World War II, *The Nation* enthusiastically embraced the idea of national economic planning to guarantee a “high-income, full-employment economy,” the only way to enable Americans to enjoy “the way of life of free men.”

Throughout Roosevelt’s presidency, *The Nation* was a combatant in the struggle over the idea of freedom. When opponents of the New Deal in 1934 created the American Liberty League, *The Nation* editorialized: “we are, of course, under no illusion as to what these eminent men have in mind when they use the word ‘liberty.’… [Their] conception of liberty is the right to maintain the old discredited order…the liberty of some men through special privilege and government favoritism, or by the absence of government control, to build up large fortunes.”

POETRY ARCHIVE

April 18, 1928

The Bear

Robert Frost

The bear puts both arms round the tree above her
And draws it down as if it were a lover
And its choke-cherries lips to kiss goodby,
Then lets it snap back upright in the sky.
Her next step rocks a boulder on the wall.
(She’s making her cross-country in the fall.)
Her great weight creaks the barbed wire in its staples
As she flings over and off down through the maples,
Leaving on one wire tooth a lock of hair.
Such is the uncaged progress of the bear.
The world has room to make a bear feel free.
The universe seems cramped to you and me.
Man acts more like the poor bear in a cage
That all day fights a nervous inward rage,
His mood rejecting all his mind suggests.
He paces back and forth and never rests
The toe-nail click and shuffle of his feet,
The telescope at one end of his beat,
And at the other end the microscope,
Two instruments of nearly equal hope,
And in conjunction giving quite a spread.
Or if he rests from scientific tread,
’Tis only to sit back and sway his head
Through ninety-odd degrees of arc it seems,
Between two metaphysical extremes.
He sits back on his fundamental butt
With lifted snout and eyes (if any) shut
(He almost looks religious but he’s not),
And back and forth he sways from cheek to cheek,
At one extreme agreeing with one Greek,
At the other agreeing with another Greek,
Which may be thought but only so to speak.
A baggy figure equally pathetic
When sedentary and when peripatetic.

In international affairs, Kirchwey broke decisively with a tradition shared by all her predecessors—opposition to American military interventions overseas. Godkin strongly opposed the Spanish-American War on the grounds that an imperial state would inevitably trample on individual liberty, and that the peoples of Cuba and the Philippines were unfit for participation in American democracy. Unlike most Progressives, who managed to find a way to support American entry into World War I, Villard, a committed pacifist, never became reconciled to it. In the 1920s, *The Nation* strongly criticized the American occupations of Haiti and Nicaragua. During the following decade, however, Kirchwey increasingly viewed the rise of fascism as the major threat to freedom in the world and called for collective action to combat it. In 1941, she joined the Free World Association, which urged the United States to enter the war against Hitler.

The World War II discourse of a world divided into free and unfree sectors, which originated in the antifascist crusade, took on a new meaning during the Cold War. Under Kirchwey, who remained editor until 1955, and her successor Carey McWilliams, *The Nation* became perhaps the leading journalistic voice opposing American foreign policy and defending the right of dissenters against the onslaught of McCarthyism. In 1952, the magazine devoted an entire issue to the question “How Free Is Free?” The articles outlined the depredations of the “American witch hunt,” with its blacklisting, censorship, government loyalty programs and violations of academic freedom. The magazine published writings by Edgar Snow, Owen Lattimore and other targets of “Tail-Gunner Joe” McCarthy.

McWilliams had witnessed the impact of anticommunism firsthand in California, where he began his journalistic career. California, he wrote, “has probably had more witch hunts and more free-speech fights than any state in the union.” The experience left him with “an abiding contempt for professional ‘anti-Communists.’” While the “back” of the magazine contained literary and cultural pieces severely critical of Stalin’s Russia, both Kirchwey and McWilliams felt that to couple a critique of McCarthyism with accounts of the situation in the Soviet Union would deflect attention from the threat to freedom at home. *The Nation* insisted that communists deserved precisely the same civil liberties as other Americans, and when the ACLU refused to defend their rights, McWilliams helped form the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee to do so. His stance led to angry rebuttals from many liberals who coupled aggressive anticommunism with their criticisms of McCarthy. Magazines such as *Commentary* (which had not yet embarked on the path to extreme conservatism) and *The New Leader* carried on a vendetta against *The Nation*, charging it with “Stalinism.” Despite this, at a time when many journalists enlisted in the anticommunist crusade, *The Nation* remained the most outspoken champion of the right to dissent.

McWilliams continued to criticize American foreign policy. He published prescient articles by Bernard Fall about Vietnam and, in 1965, a piece by the historian Eric Hobsbawm on how the United States could not possibly win the war there. But McWilliams lacked Kirchwey’s preoccupation with world affairs and focused more on domestic concerns. He published exposés on the link between cigarette smoking and cancer, automobile safety (by a young law student, Ralph Nader), the rise of the military-industrial complex, and the illegal activities of the FBI and CIA.

As McWilliams later wrote, however, his "special interests" were civil liberties, organized labor and race relations. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the magazine devoted increasing attention to the civil-rights revolution, then gathering momentum. In 1956, nearly a century after *The Nation*'s founding, the magazine returned to its roots with a special report on race that began with a call for the federal government to "Enforce the Constitution." *The Nation* fully embraced the militant phase of the civil-rights movement unleashed by the sit-ins of 1960. In 1962, it published an article by the civil-rights attorney Loren Miller that castigated white liberals for preferring incremental gains and ignoring the urgency of change. Blacks "don't want progress," Miller wrote, "they demand Freedom…Freedom Now."

Here was the insistent voice of the '60s, soon to be adopted in a host of campaigns by other groups that felt they did not enjoy full American freedom. Under McWilliams, *The Nation* viewed these new movements with a kind of sympathetic detachment. Most of its employees were over 40, and the cool, aloof McWilliams could not have been more different in demeanor from the decade's insurgent youth. But almost in spite of itself, as a result of what the journalist Jack Newfield called McWilliams's "intransigent radicalism" on civil rights, civil liberties and the Vietnam War, *The Nation* became a voice of '60s protest. And McWilliams's own longstanding example helped to inspire practitioners of the decade's engaged, radical journalism.

History never really repeats itself. But the questions that preoccupied *The Nation* over the course of its history remain eerily relevant today.

McWilliams left the editorship in 1975. Victor Navasky and, subsequently, Katrina vanden Heuvel succeeded him. Their leadership has coincided with the triumph in American political discourse of a definition of freedom reminiscent in many ways of E.L. Godkin's. Propagated most effectively by Ronald Reagan, it emphasizes limits on government as the essence of liberty; equates economic freedom with "free enterprise," not economic security; and sees the unregulated economic marketplace as the true realm of freedom. (Unlike Godkin's outlook, however, it is coupled with an imperial foreign policy.)

But *The Nation* has refused to cede the idea of freedom to the right. Drawing upon its complex history, it has articulated a different understanding of freedom, still grounded in a powerful commitment to personal liberty, and wary of overseas military interventions, but also fully engaged with the strivings for equality of disadvantaged groups of Americans—and rooted in a belief in the vitality of political democracy. Under Navasky, a First Amendment absolutist, *The Nation* maintained a commitment to freedom of speech and the press as cornerstones of American liberty, while extending the principle more than ever before to its own pages, which now included candid appraisals of past failures of the left. All sorts of competing viewpoints within the worlds of liberalism and radicalism clashed in the magazine's pages (sometimes it seemed that columnists were most energized by criticizing one another). And *The Nation* now fully embraced the "liberation" movements spawned by the 1960s—the second wave of feminism and demands for equality by Latinos, Native Americans, gays and others—as well as issues the left had traditionally ignored, such as environmentalism.

In the twenty-first century, with vanden Heuvel as editor, *The Nation* has displayed considerable courage by standing virtually alone among significant media outlets in opposing the rush to war in Iraq (and, more recently, Syria). Especially since the terrorist attacks of 2001, moreover, *The Nation* has been at the forefront of protests against the curtailment, in the name of fighting "terrorism," of legal protections such as habeas corpus, trial by an impartial jury, and limits on the government's power to spy on individuals. It has challenged the invocation of freedom as an excuse for war overseas (George W. Bush's Operation Iraqi Freedom, for example), and as a justification for the increasing dominance of big money in politics. And since the financial crisis of 2008, it has insistently raised the question of whether rising economic inequality and insecurity are compatible with genuine freedom.

History never really repeats itself. But the questions that preoccupied *The Nation* over the course of its history remain eerily relevant today. Will the onward march of capitalism produce a shared abundance—or a continued widening of the gap between the social classes? Will democratic self-government survive the assault of money and the transfer of economic decision-making to institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which lack any semblance of democratic legitimacy? Will the growing racial and ethnic diversity of American society promote greater tolerance, or fragmentation and bitterness? Will the ongoing revolution in the status of women, which propelled the idea of freedom into the most intimate realms of life, survive a powerful backlash? Can civil liberties co-exist with a "war on terror" that has no discernible ending point? These are the questions that will shape the life of the nation, and *The Nation*, in the years to come. In the twenty-first century, the need for a positive, expansive, socially responsible understanding of freedom is as great as at any time in *The Nation*'s history. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

GLORIA STEINEM

When I first moved to New York in the 1960s, I made a list of all the things New Yorkers did that made me afraid of them. They ate rare meat; they said things three times that Midwesterners wouldn't say once; they lived by past political divisions I'd never heard of; and they argued all the time. Gradually, I discovered that repetition was passion, that those political divisions were still playing out in the present, that arguing was an evidence of caring—and that it was OK if I became a vegetarian.

I want to thank *The Nation* for being my most consistent and long-term instructor in all these things: for giving me the inspiration of voices like Victor Navasky, Patricia J. Williams and Katha Pollitt; for demonstrating how to argue with respect for each other and the facts; and for proving that we can lose our power only by failing to use it.

BECAUSE
TOMORROW
NEEDS
HER
MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS
Photo © Martina Bacigalupo

SAVING A MOTHER'S LIFE CAN MEAN
SAVING TWO LIVES.

Most of the patients in Doctors Without Borders projects around the world are women and children. Providing emergency medical care to women in these contexts can be challenging, but it must be done. Saving a woman's life often means saving at least one additional life, since children who lose their mothers are far less likely to survive.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH AT:

womenshealth.msf.org

BECAUSE THEY NEED HER, WE NEED HER, AND #TOMORROWNEEDSHER

Night Thoughts

On reverence, rebellion and other alternatives to social suicide.

JoANN WYPIJEWSKI

January 7, 2015

I heard news of the killing at about the time the streets of Paris were filling with mourners raising their signs: "*Je suis Charlie.*" I felt nothing for the dead, and then sorrow that I felt nothing. Certainly, I was not shocked. Unless one is right up in it, mass political killing isn't shocking anymore; it's a day job. Take a drone operator: he sits in a trailer in Nevada tracking his prey on a screen, watching the target count out money for bread, talk with his friends (conspirators?), play with his children, make love with his wife, doodle idly, until the moment another drone operator hits the button to release the missile that will tear that faraway man and anyone near him to pieces. None of the best men and women of the West link arms to decry the drone operator's handiwork. They do not weep, even for him. Like his victims, he is known but invisible, necessary but overlooked; the images of smoldering body parts are his private horror, tearing him apart in a parking lot after a twelve-hour shift. So, no, protest as we might, we are not shocked by killing, merely by who is killed. Which is why those signs in Paris, broadcast relentlessly, filled me with dread. "I am white," they said. "I am lucky and smug, educated just enough to cloak my bigotry in the snowy garment of freedom, deluded or cynical enough to call peddling the hoariest of conventional ideas subversive." If we are Charlie, I thought, heaven help us all.

Then I scoured the attic of memory for some human things, some light and sturdy anger, for if an honorable language of resistance was not to be found in the killers or the victims or the pinched solidarity, it is not to be found in bile or a contest between the dead, either.

July or August 1979

It was one of those days that brought ladies in scuffs and thin housecoats out of the tenements and onto the sidewalk, fanning themselves on plastic lawn chairs. A dog day, a phrase I didn't appreciate until walking on 14th Street one afternoon in the desperate heat, dreadfully poor, and spying a dog plodding toward me with his tongue hanging out. A $10 bill was pasted there. The dog moved slow, I slower; everyone else on the street hurried by, not noticing the mangy animal or the moist tongue, or not needing the $10—all but one, a slim black man eyeing that bill as hungrily as I. We two stopped, the dog advancing between us. What were the chances, I tried to calculate, that I could make a clean swipe of it, that the dog wouldn't bite, that if he did he wouldn't have rabies, that if he did have rabies I could endure the shots, but would I have to pay for them? A lot of "ifs" for $10. Maybe the man was thinking the same, maybe recalling beautiful, doomed Tea Cake in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. We watched each other like hunters, tense with daring but more with fear and a prickly shame; then laughed together, absurd and only half-relieved, as the instant to strike passed and the dog went its way with the cash.

The signs in Paris, broadcast relentlessly, filled me with dread. If we are Charlie, I thought, heaven help us all.

On just such a day, in the cool refuge of the dollar cinema, I first saw *The Battle of Algiers*. The world looked different after that. I had been shielded the way most Americans, most white kids anyway, were from the European colonial experience. "Vietnam" had meant mainly a US atrocity and an antiwar movement that belonged to the spectacles of childhood. France, whose art, cooking and language served mostly to satisfy our pretensions, was out of the Great Power game and had somehow escaped the charge of racism. White power I considered America's special curse, though one that only vaguely implicated Polish, Northern, freewheeling me.

Something shifted, some door of perception flung open, as the three Arab women on-screen removed their abayas and dyed, powdered and otherwise made themselves up into Europeans, able to pass as *colons* at police barricades. This is the film's emotional center. Their transformation is an irrevocable act. They have become soldiers, the colonized appropriating the style of the colonizers in order to kill them. At the cafe where one of the women leaves her basket, the counter is thick with the French young—in my memory, white women smiling and raking their fingers through their hair moments before the bomb goes off. None of them deserves to die, just as 157 men, women and children in the Casbah blown up earlier by settlers and police did not deserve to die, just as Algeria did not deserve 130 years of colonization, massacre, torture and humiliation.

Many years later, I would be pleased to know Eqbal Ahmad, a lovely man and rigorous anti-imperialist, who among many things in his too-short life had been part of the National Liberation Front's delegation in peace talks with the French, and later a researcher and adviser on the film. He told this story: Gillo Pontecorvo, the director, initially had the soundtrack play Beethoven every time a *pied noir* died, and an Arabic dirge every time a native Algerian died. "This is something I don't like," said Saadi Yacef, his associate director, as the film was nearing final cut. "You have to have the Algerian dirge for both of us. Otherwise, we are separating even the dead according to nationality." Yacef had written a book from prison that became the basis for the script; an FLN leader, he played himself in the film.

Thus the same dirge plays for all the dead, many hundreds of thousands by the time the war ended: most Algerian, most killed by the French, though savagery knew no nationality. An occupation so begun could not have ended otherwise unless the French had quit at the start of the insurrection; they chose torture and slaughter instead. It's often said that the movie is an argument for terrorism, and there may be no more economical insight into the choice of "weapons of the weak" than when the rebel leader tells the press that the nationalists would gladly exchange their women's baskets for the French army, air force, navy, police—all of which were deployed against the Algerians. On that summer day, though, I read the film as an argument against innocence. In ways apparent and obscured, the regime of segregation and violence had worked for the easygoing girls at the cafe, even as it inured them, threatened them. They were not innocent, which is not the same as saying they were guilty. The film is not about them, us, anyone whom power seemingly protects, but I walked from the theater as if from a sermon for an insurrection of the mind.

150 YEARS

THE 12.5 MILLION
WORKING WOMEN AND MEN
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THE NATION

FOR 150 YEARS OF
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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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Secretary-Treasurer

TEFERE GEBRE
Executive Vice President

April 1, 1980

Revolution, Andrew Kopkind had written in 1968, though not in *The Nation*, "is at once the most tragic and redeeming social experience. It is what societies do instead of committing suicide, when the alternatives are exhausted and all the connections that bind men's lives in familiar patterns are cut." I had not had that as an assist in mulling Algerian tragedies, nor did I meet Andy on this day, my birthday, when I mark my beginnings at the magazine. He would not arrive for two more years, but had I not approached the reception desk looking more for possibility than a paycheck—asking, remarkably to me now, "Do you use free workers?" and being told, "We call them interns"—it's doubtful I would have read the lines above or met him or, because of him, Alexander Cockburn, and so Edward Said and Eqbal and... The crackling universe of unsettling ideas turned out to be vast. Not vast enough, never vast enough. I had slipped through a crack to privilege. There would be no honest way of thinking again about the multiple "connections that bind men's lives" without also taking that into account.

I read the film as an argument against innocence, and walked from the theater as if from a sermon for an insurrection of the mind.

POETRY ARCHIVE

January 30, 1960

Two Views of a Cadaver Room

Sylvia Plath

I

The day she visited the dissecting room
They had four men laid out, black as burnt turkey,
Already half unstrung. A vinegary fume
Of the death vats clung to them;
The white-smocked boys started working.
The head of his cadaver had caved in,
And she could scarcely make out anything
In that rubble of skull plates and old leather.
A sallow piece of string held it together.

In their jars the snail-nosed babies moon and glow.
He hands her the cut-out heart like a cracked heirloom.

II

In Brueghel's panorama of smoke and slaughter
Two people only are blind to the carrion army:
He, afloat in the sea of her blue satin
Skirts, sings in the direction
Of her bare shoulder, while she bends,
Fingering a leaflet of music, over him,
Both of them deaf to the fiddle in the hands
Of the death's-head shadowing their song.
These Flemish lovers flourish; not for long.

Yet desolation, stalled in paint, spares the little country
Foolish, delicate, in the lower right hand corner.

We interns toiled in a big room with a big couch, a Nerf basketball hoop and a wall of shelves weighty with bound volumes dating from July 6, 1865. My assignment was to consult those, as well as riotous files on an upper floor and other sources, to draft a list of *Nation* "firsts"—first to publish James Baldwin, first to warn of the Bay of Pigs, first to reveal what strontium-90 was doing to human bones, etc.—and anything else that might spark up a promotional piece one day.

To start with the bound volumes meant entering the world of E.L. Godkin; opening the files was a dip into the 1950s–'70s of Carey McWilliams. Godkin I'd imagined as a brave Reconstructionist; McWilliams, with a column in 1980, seemed part of the unheroic present. I was wrong about both, though it took a while—years, really—to grasp the full import of my mistake.

I didn't like Godkin, who certainly hadn't liked my people, immigrant industrial workers whose only distinctive quality was that sometimes they struck and had to be starved or shot like wild animals. What linguistic brio he brought to journalism, considered bold and iconoclastic in 1865, he put in the service of the ruling ideology. What differences he had were a matter of degree. The ugliness beneath his irony and refinement—his disdain for workers and faith in boundless free-market opportunity, his impatience with black protestations (*Vote with your feet if you're scared*, he advised), his denunciations of regulation and of the poor as shiftless degenerates, his determination that racism was not a white problem—prefigures nothing so much as the blowhard faction of the contemporary right. Limbaughism without the false populism.

I dismissed him as a racist and elitist, as indeed he was, but now he too seems a figure of tragedy, affecting worldliness while cosseted among the "best men," trumpeting independence while hewing to the conventions of money power, professing the virtues of culture but evincing no interest in the human persons who create it or become its casualties. A small, sour man, he left one big gift: he forces us to face our history without evasion, something he could not do, something America's failure to do is blowing up the world.

February 6, 1982

Of course, Carey McWilliams was courageous. Like his predecessor, Freda Kirchwey, he flouted official ideology when that was hardest, and when most liberal institutions surrendered to anticommunism. But many people have courage; there wouldn't be black Americans or a history of resistance without it. Red-baiting had seemed a tarnished antique when I'd riffled through McWilliams's files. Now here was Susan Sontag at a Town Hall event engaging in a version of it, and declaring semi-famously that people would have learned more about the Soviet bloc reading *Reader's Digest* than *The Nation* since 1950. They might have learned more about the United States reading *Consumer Reports* and the Bible, but they wouldn't have learned much about the nature of US power, which is the first responsibility of anyone deriving its benefits and enduring its costs. Sontag's speech, a trifle on its own, prefigured Limbaughism too: coarse, aimed to offend, insincere. It was also in vogue. Anticommunism was back in Reagan's America, and with that, McWilliams's fragmentary papers, letters and "Night Thoughts"—typed memos to himself—no longer seemed like curios. They were traces of a longer-view project to preserve space for the insurrectionary thought. Andy Kopkind would soon explain the anatomy of "The Return of Cold War Liberalism," its new forms and old function: elevating military values, blunting debate, foreclosing any left alternative, bleeding the Third World. For the rest of the decade-plus, he and Alex Cockburn and others would refresh the language of the left, dissecting the deceptions of Reaganism, its liberal helpers and heirs; giving air to opposing movements; revealing the US hand in wars from Latin America to the Middle East to Africa and Asia; foreshadowing the coming catastrophes. Whatever frustrations I might've had with McWilliams's magazine—that it was interested in but not of the movement energies of the era—the man had bequeathed a singular heritage. Not policy ideas, though those would come; not a preoccupation with glorious victims, though victims he surely championed; rather, an example of gutsy iconoclasm and genuine solidarity. He made future bravery possible.

TESTIMONIALS

JOHN WATERS

Reading *The Nation* makes me yearn for the days of the "red diaper" baby! Oh, how I wish I had been a communist sympathizer in the '50s. But no, I was born too late, so I had to settle for being a Yippie and then, as I matured politically, morphing into a bleeding-heart liberal with admittedly "limousine" tendencies. Preaching to the converted is not necessarily a bad thing, and I depend on *The Nation* to keep me thinking in the right way—left—just in case I get too big for my social and financial britches.

April 28, 2015

Not all anniversaries are commemorated. The day the pictures from Abu Ghraib were first broadcast is like any other now. When was that again—2004? A year earlier, the Pentagon had screened *The Battle of Algiers* for its Special Ops chiefs, but what was the aim? Torture and war have been the steady gruel for so long, it's hard to keep track of details if the images are not seared in the brain as symbols of your people's subjection. In the media, it seemed almost quaint that the killers in France mentioned Abu Ghraib. That particular scandal had a short run here; after the Army's first trial of a low-level soldier in January of 2005, only a handful of reporters followed the others. By then, there seemed to be no national conscience left to shock. I was among those reporters, and an image memory from one of the later trials stays with me: there's a break in the proceedings; lawyers and the few spectators mill about; the jurors are gone, but one has left his video monitor on (jurors had them to scrutinize the photos); it shows two naked, hooded prisoners simulating fellatio; the image is plain as the wallpaper, and no one blinks. The forced simulation of fellatio is by no stretch the worst abuse committed by US agents or troops. It is, however, perhaps most telling of the American mind on terror. The body in pain evokes nothing. The Muslim is a pinup donkey. Humiliation—because there was no mistaking the two men in hoods for people making love—is a commonplace. The "shock jock" is Everyman, and empathy flies away.

Our jokes are tired. Our lynching-picnic roots have been showing a long time. Revolution may not be in the offing, but social suicide is possible. In such a situation, where being offensive is the dominant theme of cultural and political life, to offend is not radical, any more than murder is. Where everything is irreverence, reverence is the resistant act—for ourselves, for the integrity of another human soul, for the connections that bind us, in possibility and peril. **150th**

HARLIE
JE SUIS

TIM ROBINSON

Going All the Way

For many paladins of the American right, their back pages were in our back pages.

RICK PERLSTEIN

WHEN NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV SENT TANKS INTO HUNGARY to crush a grassroots uprising in 1956, many radicals chose that moment to stop apologizing for the Soviet Union. Ronald Radosh, a red-diaper baby who published seventeen articles in *The Nation* between 1966 and 1980, decided it was time to join the Communist Party USA.

Later, when sane people were celebrating the end of the Vietnam War, Radosh and those around him regarded the moment as "an occasion for deep melancholy." They liked the Vietnam War, he explained in his memoir, *Commies*; it gave their lives meaning. Now that our country was no longer laying waste to Third World peasants, America, for these folks, "could no longer so easily be called *Amerika*." And now that the exigencies of war could no longer excuse the communists' human-rights abuses, their struggle could no longer be idealized as the heroic effort to create a model Marxist society: "The idea of an immediate, no-fault revolution, a fantasy of the previous decade, was no longer tenable."

With that, Radosh doubled down again and traveled to Cuba with a group of revolutionary enthusiasts. One day, they visited a mental hospital. A doctor there boasted, "In our institution, we have a larger proportion of hospital inmates who have been lobotomized than any other mental hospital in the world." Back on their bus, a flabbergasted therapist exclaimed, "Lobotomy is a horror. We must do something to stop this." Another member of the American delegation shot back: "We have to understand that there are differences between capitalist lobotomies and socialist lobotomies."

Radosh, of course, ended up on the political right. The final straw came when he published a book in 1983 arguing that Julius Rosenberg was indeed guilty of the crime for which he had been executed in 1953. Radosh found himself unfairly attacked from the left. Thus was he moved to "consider the ultimate heresy: perhaps the Left was wrong not just about the Rosenberg case, but about most everything else.… My journey to America was about to reach its final leg."

But he notes something else in his memoir, baldly contradicting his earlier claim about the left being wrong about "most everything": some on the left defended him, including in the pages of *The Nation*. He doesn't note that two of his intellectual adversaries, Walter and Miriam Schneir, ultimately changed their minds about the case in the face of new evidence.

Radosh's political journey follows a familiar pattern, well documented among *Nation* writers who end their careers on the right: a rigid extremist, possessed of the most over-the-top revolutionary fantasies, comes face to face with the complexity of the real world, then "changes sides" and makes his career by hysterically identifying the "socialist lobotomies" set as the only kind of leftist there is—ignoring evidence to the contrary that's right in front of his nose.

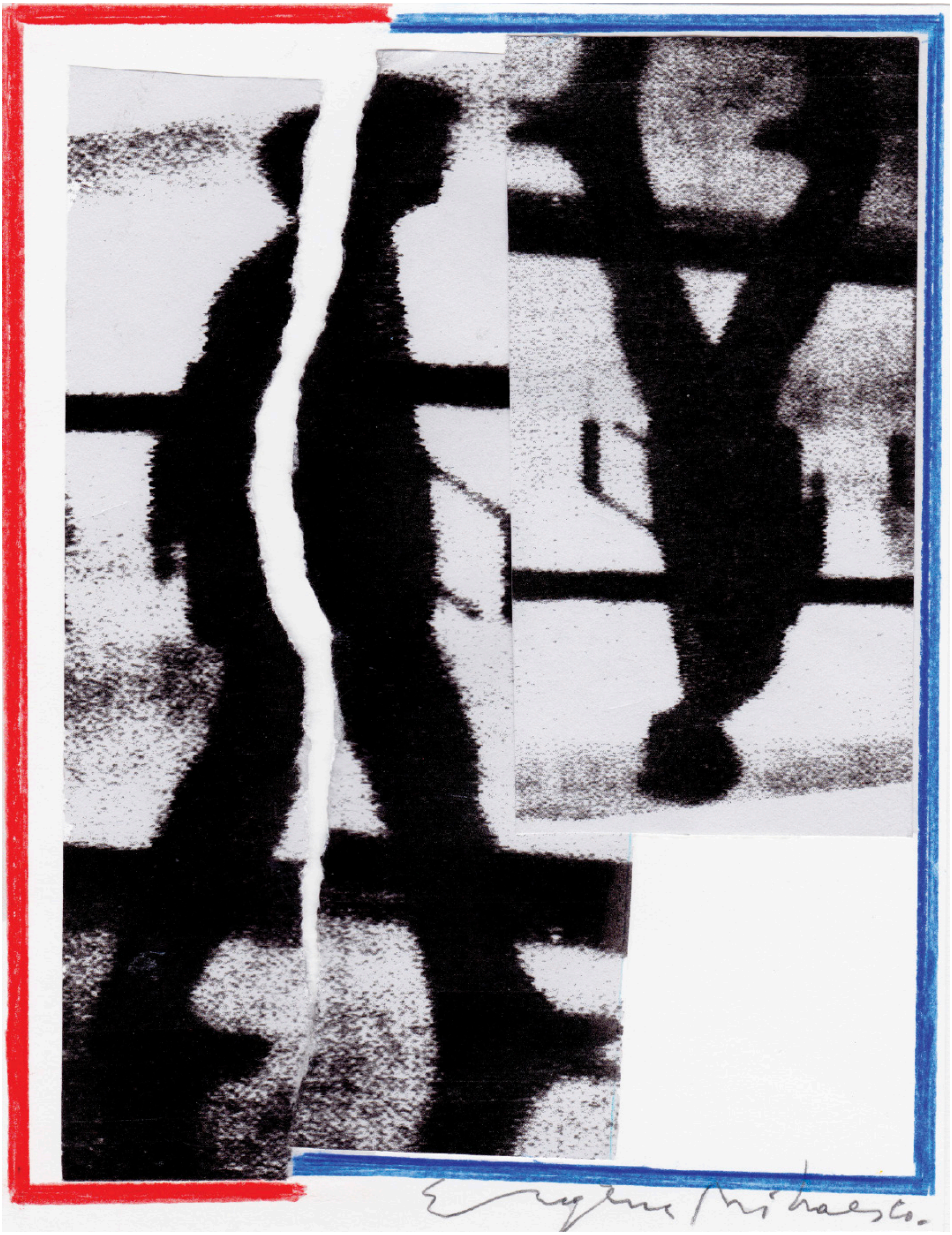
One of the first leftists to abandon the tribe in the pages of *The Nation* was no less than the magazine's longtime owner and columnist, Oswald Garrison Villard.

ONE OF THE FIRST LEFTISTS TO ABANDON the tribe in the pages of *The Nation* was no less than the magazine's longtime owner and columnist, Oswald Garrison Villard (1872–1949). Villard was such a doctrinaire pacifist that he resigned his column in protest in June 1940 because *The Nation* favored the United States' rearming to fight Hitler. As he wrote in his valedictory, the magazine had abandoned "the chief glory of its great and honorable past": its "steadfast opposition to all preparations for war." He predicted that the course the editors were proposing would "inevitably end all social and political progress, lower still further the standard of living, enslave labor, and, if persisted in, impose a dictatorship and turn us into a totalitarian state." Villard ended up starring in a 1975 book, *Prophets on the Right: Profiles of Conservative Critics of American Globalism*, whose author happened to be Ronald Radosh.

The novelist and critic Granville Hicks (1901–1982) was an orthodox communist who in 1933 published a Marxist history of American literature. In 1940, however, Hicks published an essay in *The Nation* titled "The Blind Alley of Marxism," in which he excoriated his comrades' unexamined political assumptions. Why, for instance, should "the elimination of the economic contradictions of capitalism inevitably and automatically [lead] to the higher stage of social development?" And why, he asked—not long after the Moscow trials railroaded many of the founders of the Soviet state into gulags—do American radicals give "carte blanche…to a little group of men, five thousand miles away?" This was thoughtful stuff, but rather than sticking around to nurture a rich debate, Hicks became an eager namer of names to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The culture and history of the left, of course, is shot through with silly, ideologically driven absurdities ("socialist lobotomies," to coin a phrase). There is, for example, the argument Radosh made in *The Nation* in 1966 that Henry Wallace, perhaps the furthest-left major public official in the history of the United States, was actually a capitalist sellout. Another part of the pattern: the tendency to depict ostensibly revolutionary societies as lands straight out of a fairy tale. Max Eastman (1883–1969), who ended up in the orbit of *National Review*, filed a dispatch for *The Nation* in 1923 on a rail journey through Russia whose childlike wonder rivaled a scene from Tom Hanks's *The Polar Express*. The passport functionary "was almost magically friendly and gentle." The cars were "wider than railroad cars in America." The cabin had "clean white bed-linen at a mild price, and a friendly young host in a workingman's shirt who came in every once in a while to know if we wouldn't like some tea."

Some radicals have no problem maturing away from fantasies absorbed at the height of their revolutionary fervor while maintaining the moral core of their commitment to the broader left. Eastman, Radosh and, most famously, Whittaker Chambers (1901–1961), who contributed occasional poems to *The Nation* in the 1920s, instead went "all the way." Afterward, they



Eugène Mihaesco

EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

projected their own extremism onto the entire left and thus became conservative heroes. This is because they performed a matchless service in letting conservatives ignore the evidence of their senses: that the actual left is thoughtful, humane and diverse. Even if you're a confessed traitor like Chambers, your sins—provided you undergo the proper purification rites—are not an impediment to an embrace from the right, but an advertisement. By bearing witness to the myth that the right's adversaries are more wicked than other conservatives could possibly imagine, you ritualistically renourish the moral Manichaeism without which no right wing worthy of the name can survive.

David Horowitz, for example, was an occasional contributor whose first *Nation* article was a 1964 essay about suicide in Scandinavia. In it, he argued it was no surprise that Swedes and Danes would want to kill themselves—because those countries were still, after all, *capitalist* nations. He now edits FrontPageMag.com, for which his friend Ronald Radosh publishes articles like "The American Left: Friends of Our Country's Enemies." In 1979, on the cusp of his own apostasy, Horowitz wrote an essay wondering whether the left could ever shed its "arrogant cloak of self-righteousness that elevates it above its own history and makes it impervious to the lessons of experience." That essay, however, was published in *The Nation*—vitiating his very claim about the arrogant self-righteousness of the left.

J. Edgar Hoover once called communism "a disease that spreads like an epidemic, and like an epidemic, quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting the nation." The apostate from the left adds another crucial detail to that etiology: the idea that the infection is all the more frightening and dangerous because it's invisible, hiding within its host until it finds the opportune moment to do the most damage. Liberalism, like the devil, hides its true face. Thus the slogan of Horowitz's FrontPageMag.com: "Inside Every Liberal Is a Totalitarian Screaming to Get Out." That's how conservatives can depict centrists like Barack Obama and Bill Clinton as aspiring commissars. Didn't Clinton, after all, hire the "black Marxist Johnetta [*sic*] Cole," as Radosh describes the former president of Spelman College, to direct his transition team for education? Back in the days of Radosh's trip to Cuba, Cole too had been a supporter of Fidel Castro. And so, wrote his friend Eric Breindel in the *New York Post*, the conclusion was "inescapable" that Clinton was not "interested in distinguishing between a left-liberal and someone who cast her lot with the cause of Communist totalitarianism."

OF COURSE, PLENTY OF *NATION* writers traveled rightward with their honor intact. The sociologist Alan Wolfe, once a gentlemanly radical, is now a gentlemanly centrist. He helps to make my point: his contributions to these pages in the 1970s and '80s were resolutely unsilly; he doesn't have to despise leftists now because he never gave himself a reason to despise the leftist he was then. Max Lerner (1902–1992), a towering legend of American liberalism, published some forty-four articles here between 1936 and 1940. He became, in his late 70s, an admirer of Ronald Reagan—but his columns on the subject were full of thoughtful admonitions that liberals hurt only themselves by dismissing the fortieth president as a dunce. And the political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain (1941–2013) made the same useful criticisms about the glibness of some radical feminists' deconstructions of "the family" in 1979 that she did when she later aligned with George W. Bush.

Others, though, evinced one of the ugliest traditions on the left: revolutionary megalomania, the display of a will to power in which the writer embraces radicalism in order to aggrandize himself. A curious note emerges among the admirers of the Soviet experiment who wrote in these pages in the 1930s and '40s. In the Soviet Union and Cuba, the intellectuals who harnessed themselves to the correct side in the battle between socialism and barbarism died as prophets (or, in the case of Trotsky, great martyrs). Back in the United States, writers could secretly imagine the same imminent fate for themselves: that when the revolution came in America, they would become its heroes—or even its leaders.

This grandiosity helps explain why apparently intelligent writers would sign on to a project so manifestly unintelligent as America's invasion of Iraq.

This grandiosity helps explain why apparently intelligent writers would sign on to a project so manifestly unintelligent as America's invasion of Iraq, confident it would go exactly as planned. We find a clue in a children's book published in 1982 by Paul Berman, *The Nation*'s onetime theater critic, who went on to a career as a self-described "liberal" booster of Dick Cheney's adventure in Iraq, framing it as an existential struggle against Islamic fascism. It was called *Make-Believe Empire: A How-To Book*, and it is described by the Library of Congress as "A fantasy-craft book which tells how to construct a capital city and an imperial navy…. Provides instructions for writing laws, decrees, proclamations, treaties, and imperial odes."

Left or right, it doesn't much matter: it sure is a bracing feeling for the chair-bound intellectual to imagine himself the drivetrain in the engine of history. Or at the very least a prophet, standing on the correct side of history and looking down upon moral midgets who insist the world is more complicated than all that. Consider Christopher Hitchens: the former Trotskyist wrote, following his 2002 resignation as a *Nation* columnist, that by not embracing things like the Iraq War, "*The Nation* joined the amoral side…. I say that they stand for neutralism where no such thing is possible or desirable, and I say the hell with it."

It is the turncoat's greatest gift to his new hosts: the affirmation that the world exists only in black and white. They're the good guys, we're the bad guys. The rest of us can aspire to something better: no more socialist lobotomies.

150th

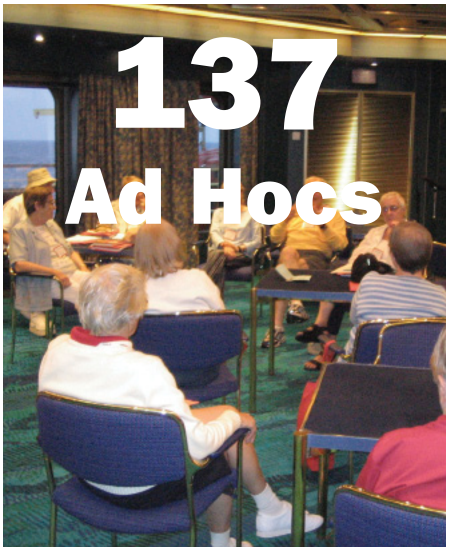
TESTIMONIALS

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

1893

What fearful mental degeneracy results from reading…*The Nation* as a steady thing.

6,672
Readers



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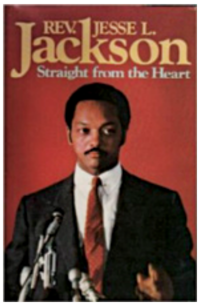
How to Lose Friends and Influence People

...and other tales from the "back of the book."

ELIZABETH POCHODA

IN 1976, WHEN I ARRIVED AT *THE NATION*, AMERICA WAS NOT booming. The aftermath of the 1960s, the Carter/Reagan years, was an era of bad faith and bad feeling, of low cultural energy, of pessimism on the disintegrating left. In this climate, you would expect the magazine's arts section to fight the power by becoming the agitprop master of ceremonies for our unpopular front. That did not strike me as a very inviting road to take.

But I might have had to take it were it not for *The Nation*'s long tradition of allowing its Books and the Arts section an independence almost unique in journalism—and I think I can say that with some authority, having been around the block in magazineland since then. In its 150-year history, the arts section has occasionally been to the left of the front of the magazine, more often to its right and sometimes, as in my tenure, deliberately all over the place. It speaks to the decency of a publication often accused of hewing to a hard line that it allows this freedom. And in my case, it speaks also to Victor Navasky's editorship, which was not so much "wily"—Calvin Trillin's word—as *liberal*.



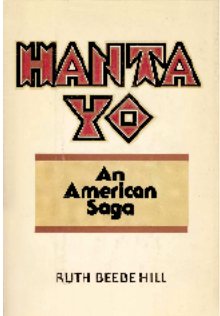
But before we get to those years, I should explain that there was a "trickle-down" effect of editorial independence—to use the annoying Reaganite term of that era. What I was given in terms of freedom I bestowed in turn on critics and reviewers, knowing that I was bound to disagree with them from time to time. That was not the hard part. The hard part, the sometimes regrettable part, came in those instances when a writer tested our commitment to the First Amendment with opinions bound to wound our friends, fellow editors and the magazine's supporters. I think I can be forgiven for being unwilling to recount any of those instances here. They were remarkably painful, and the slim satisfaction of sticking to principle did not seem worth it. One afternoon, as I was readying for publication a particularly severe review of a book by a writer who was also a friend, the phone rang. It was Chris Calhoun, our advertising director. "You sound like you're in hell sitting on a bench next to Roy Cohn," he said. It could be like that sometimes.

Once you start causing this kind of trouble, more of it comes your way—a good thing, I thought at the time.

But occasionally, as with Mary Summers's review detailing Jesse Jackson's political and personal shortcomings—which appeared just before the magazine endorsed him in the Democratic presidential primary—our discomfort seemed to me a small price to pay for a healthy shot of candor. Summers's article created a difficult moment in the office, but we survived it, and in my view the magazine was the better for that.

As the 1970s turned into the 1980s, I was increasingly convinced that *The Nation*'s arts section should play a role in the mainstream cultural conversation, that it should take on the rising tide of cant in the land. Of course, we continued to cover significant titles from small presses; kept our eye on books about civil rights, nuclear disarmament, Latin America and elsewhere; reviewed significant fiction; and knew what the poets of Ghana were up to—but independence gave us the latitude to have some fun at the expense of the latest thing in books, films, theater. (In all of this, I was helped by a series of assistant literary editors who were, I can say without false modesty, more able than I: Gordon Graham Dowling, Amy Wilentz, Elena Brunet, Maria Margaronis, Julie Abraham.) Why, I wondered at the time, should a big, pulpy bestseller not be fodder for *The Nation*'s pages?

When Doubleday published *Hanta Yo*, marketed as the Native American version of Alex Haley's *Roots*, the anthropologist Raymond DeMallie's review, "Ayn Rand Meets Hiawatha" [April 28, 1979], disclosed the book's bogus ethnography and the political agenda of its author, Ruth Beebe Hill. And he did so in a stylish, scholarly article that was much talked about, is still a pleasure to read, and continues to be cited to set the record straight on the Plains Indians and the dreadful (and dreadfully popular) *Hanta Yo*.

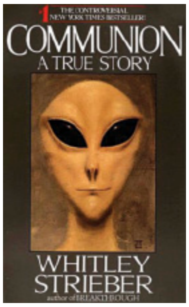


Once you start causing this kind of trouble, more of it comes your way—a good thing, I thought at the time. Tom Disch's hilarious, nearly 6,000-word review of Whitley Strieber's "nonfiction" account of his abduction by aliens, *Communion* [March 14, 1987], was an outlandish tour de force in which Tom describes being abducted by extraterrestrials who force him to wear a Mr. Peanut costume as he tries to interview Strieber. It was a brilliant piece that did nothing to prevent *Communion* from hitting No. 1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Even so, it is still out there as a definitive account of the kind of hoax that money, cynicism and the publishing business will concoct. When Tom died in 2008, I remember seeing the piece mentioned as the best book review ever written. It just might be.

If the cultural climate of those years was, as I've said, mostly room temperature, it isn't surprising that its antidote at *The Nation* were high jinks like Tom's, as well as a fair number of polemics. Like a great piece of satire (for example, Calvin Trillin's "Dinner at the de la Rentas'," which took aim at a drooling *New York Times Magazine* cover story describing the fashion designer and his wife as if they were latter-day Medicis [January 17, 1981]), a good polemic outlasts its specific occasion even as it delivers a kick to the passing scene. Most of the memorable ones of those years arrived unbidden. (By which I mean I did not necessarily see them coming, a certain unpredictability being part of their charm in a magazine of necessarily predictable political opinion.) But I knew what I was getting into when Barbara Grizzuti Harrison wanted to take on Joan Didion… or I thought I did. I have long been reluctant to reread that 7,000-word annihilation of Didion's every sentence, suspecting that I would wince at this high-spirited killing. But I have finally done so, and I think it is grand. It is an outraged and outrageous piece, wonderfully wrong occasionally and much more wonderfully right, hilarious at times, sanctimonious at others, a passionate, bighearted and very smart moral calling to account of a writer pretty much indistinguishable from the heroine of *Play It as It Lays*, a "fragile madonna of acedia and anomie." Take a look. Yes, Harrison's political views did happen to line up with the magazine's—but allowing her all those words when we could have reviewed the book on Albanian trade unions that Victor had retrieved from the discard pile? You had to appreciate the freedom. I still do. Oh, and the article sometimes comes up all these years later when the subject of Joan Didion does.

I DO NOT WANT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT Victor did little more than tolerate an irreverent arts section. I know that he admired Arthur Danto's art reviews, that he was proud to publish (as we all still are) Stuart Klawans's film criticism, that he liked having a critic such as Tom Disch write about theater. The "arts" were as strong as the "books" in the section; its critics were independent—of me, of received opinion, of everything save the rogue territory they each staked out and that the mainstream had to reckon with.

It should be noted at this point that although Victor is invariably well-behaved, he has often delighted in, and even encouraged, the bad behavior of others—which brings us, as so much at *The Nation* in those days inevitably did, to the Hiss case, and to one day in particular: the screening in our offices of *Concealed Enemies*, the 1984 TV miniseries on the case starring Edward Herrmann as Alger Hiss. I was loitering in Andy Kopkind's office that morning while he was under his desk, fooling with the plug for his Smith Corona. Victor entered with some excitement: "Betsy, Andy, Alger is here!" Andy looked up: "And not a moment too soon, Victor. I'm having trouble with my typewriter." Did Victor smile? He did not, and I am certain he would not have a few hours into the screening had he seen Andy's version of the Pumpkin Papers in the form of a tiny, thrice-folded note handed to me: "Guilty as charged. I'm going to lunch." If we want to account for the irreverence of Books and the Arts in those years, we might look closer to home than the malaise of the Carter/Reagan era, and instead at the mischief engendered by the weird mix of Victor Navasky's political correctness and his enjoyment in the wayward behavior of others. It made much possible. **150th**



The Dream Life of Desire

Drawing a line between poetry and the political has never been simple.

ANGE MLINKO

GRACE SCHULMAN, THE POETRY EDITOR OF *THE NATION* FROM 1972 to 2006, once remarked that this magazine's "poems and criticism have been more consistently literary" than political. The "back of the book," as she called it, constitutes the soul of the magazine: not pushed to the back as a matter of lesser importance (though some certainly see it that way), but "back" as in *backing*—the fundus or bottom of; supporting, strengthening; the hidden spring. Front of the book: reportage, editorials, the debating of laws and action bolstered by facts and figures. Back of the book: intuitions, counterfactuals, representations that may contradict our self-proclaimed beliefs. It's an old trope, and damned if it doesn't shore up the lyrical in favor of its own argument, but there it is: the back of the book has an authority rooted in our dream life.

But Schulman's division between the political and the literary in poetry isn't so clear-cut. *Nation* readers may know that among the magazine's earliest contributors were bona fide men of letters: Charles Eliot Norton, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier and Henry James (who, at the age of 22, panned Walt Whitman's *Drum-Taps*). The first poetry actually printed herein was a pair of Civil War sonnets by the Irishman (and Wordsworth epigone) Aubrey de Vere, "The American Struggle":

Lo! as an eagle battling through a cloud,
That from his neck all night the vapor flings,
And ploughs the dark, till downward from his wings
Fierce sunrise smites with light some shivering crowd….

The poem has not worn well. To my mind, Peter Gizzi's "On What Became of Mathew Brady's Battle Photographs" is the best poem about the Civil War that *The Nation* has published, and it took until January 22, 2007:

Sunlight and plant light
glass and stain
the campaign the conflict
the dead frozen in air
the sun and the sweat
the swell of fetid flesh
the tears the ache
the empty gut the ache
the heat of loss
the nerves burn
and the shock
of never returning burns
in the belly
and the brain alike
these images lifting off
into air, dissolving
into heat and light
defy gravity
lifting off
they are going now
Mother, they are gone

Is it political? Its despair can't be political in any positive sense. Is it literary? It eschews conventions; the language is unadorned; no tropes present themselves, except in the cumulative effect of all these disappearances: first the pain disappears, then the body disappears and then, terrifyingly, even the photographs disappear. Relation itself ("Mother") is going to disappear. Despite the apparent drabness of the poem, it is actually a potent successor to Emily Dickinson's "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—": "First—Chill—then Stupor—then the letting go—."

So the "literary" may or may not be more reliable than the "political" as a criterion for a poem; try to define these terms with any degree of precision and you end up in an even greater muddle. Is Daisy Fried's "Women's Poetry," from June 22, 2009, literary or political? And in what ways?

> …when out of the gaping wound
> of the car-detailing garage (smells like metallic sex)
> came a Nissan GT-R fitted with an oversized spoiler.
> Backing out sounded like clearing the throat of god.
> A gold snake zizzed around the license plate.
> Sunburst hubcaps, fancy undercarriage installation
> casting a pool of violet light on the pocked pavement
> of gum blots. Was it this that filled me with desire?

Here is the dream life of desire (the dandified biological engine), as opposed to Gizzi's nightmare of oblivion. Whatever the global conflict happened to be the week they were published, these poems are equally intractable. They cannot be domesticated to a "position," but literariness seems to be the least of their concerns.

"Critics and criticism," the editorial that began on the same page as de Vere's sonnets, announced the intention to devote substantial space to "promote and develop a higher standard of criticism." Even in 1865, this required a preemptive apologia: "The question may be asked, *Cui bono*?" Indeed, who does benefit from book criticism (not to mention higher standards)? We still ask the question today.

Well, writers themselves benefit from analysis and debate, as the editorial concludes; but that wouldn't be enough to explain the persistence, despite competing cultural and economic pressures, of reviews of some of our best poets across this past century and a half (though many of their names remain stubbornly obscure to wider audiences). True, there was more discourse about poetry than poems themselves (the first poetry editor proper was not introduced until M.L. Rosenthal's appointment in 1956). No poem by Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot or Ezra Pound made it into these pages (four poems by Dickinson were printed—in 1929, forty-three years after her death), but they constituted subjects for others. Their work became touchstones of a sensibility that viewed poetry as a complement to politics.

Poetry has always been a symbolic battlefield, a theater of competing emotions and sensibilities. It is a discourse periodically riled by tempests and divided by factions.

Poetry has always been a symbolic battlefield, a theater of competing emotions and sensibilities. This view is antithetical to the inspirational strain that runs so deep in our country. Think of all of Emerson's children, from Whitman to Maya Angelou: poetry is supposed to uplift and inspire. Even W.S. Merwin demurred: "I don't see the point in negative criticism, because if a piece of writing isn't any good, time takes care of it, just gets rid of it. The virtues of criticism are in showing you things you might not have noticed, in discovering new talent and new aspects of old things" [May 16, 2011]. There is certainly ample evidence of that sort of criticism—appreciation—in these pages. In the past few decades, they have included Josephine Jacobsen on Marie Ponsot (1988), Douglas Crase on James Schuyler (1985), Marilyn Hacker on Tony Harrison (1988), John Palattella on Lorine Niedecker (2002), James Longenbach on Yeats (2011).

But cutting against that inspirational strain runs the modern strain: secular, cerebral, agonistic. It is a discourse periodically riled by tempests and divided by factions. At least since the 1980s, poetry has undergone existential crises: Who killed poetry? Whither National Poetry Month? *Can poetry matter*? The latter query became the title of a book by *Nation* contributor Dana Gioia (who included a tour de force he wrote for these pages in defense of Robinson Jeffers, well worth reading). F.D. Reeve, the Wesleyan professor and father of the actor Christopher Reeve, weighed in on the debate with "What's the Matter With Poetry?" [May 24, 1993], a defense of poetry's noncommercial virtues in argument with Gioia's plea for populism. Poetry's "apparent marginality in a population that has doubled comes not from people but from money—from twenty years of greed and a tripled national debt and control of culture by profit-minded entrepreneurs." Reeve here does for the arts what *Nation* contributors routinely do in other spheres: he points out the ways that a profit-motivated economic system contributes to antidemocratic outcomes—in this case, the marginalization of an art whose primacy to our everyday lives is demonstrable.

Anthology "wars" are another manifestation of the American grappling for the soul of poetry. Is it new, is it timeless? Is it too vernacular, is it too "academic"? From Helen Vendler's *The Harvard Book of Contemporary American Poetry* to Andrei Codrescu's *American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late*, from Rita Dove's *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* to Charles Henry Rowell's *Angles of Ascent: A Norton Anthology of Contemporary African American Poetry*, the controversies that arise around these books reflect a phantasmal anxiety about our political categories: the conservative's wariness of change, the liberal's indulgence of yakkers and yawpers; the reactionary's fear of contamination, the radical's love of destruction. Katha Pollitt knew this when she set out to summarize a conflict that

TESTIMONIALS

H.L. MENCKEN

1925

The Nation **is unique in American journalism for one thing; it is read by its enemies. They may damn it, they may have it barred from libraries, they may even—as they did during the war—try to have it put down by the police, but all the while they read it.… To an editorial writer** ***The Nation*** **is indispensable. Either he reads it, or he is an idiot.**

goes to the heart of the matter for readers of poetry and *The Nation* ["The Best and the Rest," May 11, 1998]. Yale professor Harold Bloom, "self-appointed last man on the Western-canonical barricades, savages Adrienne Rich…for selecting poems by political criteria when she edited the 1996 volume of Scribner's *Best American Poetry* annual series." Rich's selections were, according to Bloom, "of a badness not to be believed." Rich had excerpted the introduction to her edition in the October 7, 1996, issue of *The Nation* ["Defy the Space That Separates"]. According to her own testimony, this is how she chose her selections: "I was looking for poetry that could rouse me from fatigue, stir me from grief, poetry that was redemptive in the sense of offering a kind of deliverance or rescue of the imagination, and poetry that awoke delight—lip-to-lip, spark-to-spark, pleasure in recognition, pleasure in strangeness."

What Bloom derided as "political," then, Rich claimed for "delight." This goes back to the question: What does it mean to privilege political over literary values, or vice versa? When Rich wrote, in her introduction, that "I was listening, in all those pages and orderings of words, for music, for pulse and breath, for nongeneric voices," are we listening to the complaint of a merely political poet? Hardly. Nor is Bloom's complaint merely literary (as Pollitt demonstrates). But—and here's the rub—he was right: there is little pleasure, and much rhetoric, in Rich's choices. (As with her own poems, too—the English poet Rosemary Tonks once quipped: "In Miss Rich's work, the moral proportions are valid, the protagonists are sane, responsible persons, and the themes are moving on their courses. Why is it then that we are still waiting for the poetry?") The gap between our intentions and our actions, our sensibilities and our abilities, our emotions and our ideas—this is the gap that poetry exposes again and again. Poetry is felt in the blown-off head, the shaving nick, the shudder. It is tested on the body.

THIS TALE OF SOUND AND FURY SIGNIFIES EVERYthing; poetry is an art at variance with itself. Full disclosure: I have presided over my share of conflict both as a writer for the back of the book and as the poetry editor. But one of the poets I have written about appreciatively, Robert Duncan, drew on Heraclitus to explain this orneriness. "War is both King of all and Father of all," Duncan wrote, adding: "Among poets throughout the world or within any nation, men are at war…concerning the nature and responsibility of poetry." He might have been thinking of Helen of Troy or the American Dream, two ideals that produce war and poetry.

Nationalisms are a kind of poetry. So are religions. They infiltrate our dream life; they inflame our ardor. (I seize on this word after reading John Palattella's discussion of Polish poet Adam Zagajewski's *A Defense of Ardor*.) Ardor fuels our search for the good. If there are spiritual overtones to it (the sacred heart, the burning bush), a biological vitality underwrites it. So if poets, and poetry criticism, and poetry wars, persist in the back of the book, then it is because they illuminate the passions from which our frontal-lobe, rationalizing, facts-and-figures selves derive. Back of the book complements front of the book. Neither entertainment nor palliative, its authority derives exactly from its acceptance of discomfiture, strife and engagement, as well as its praise and appreciation. Ardor is all.

150th

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Spreading Feminism Far and Wide

Straight talk about essentialism, sexism, leaning in and speaking out.

BETSY REED AND KATHA POLLITT

In this e-mail discussion, which took place in January 2015, "Subject to Debate" columnist Katha Pollitt and former executive editor Betsy Reed, now editor in chief of the Intercept, reflect on the state of contemporary feminism, both in the nation and in The Nation.

REED: In December 1992, sitting at my messy editorial assistant's desk in the offices of the glossy magazine where I worked at the time, I read your *Nation* essay, "Are Women Morally Superior to Men?" I didn't know you personally yet, but as a reader, I hung on your every word. And here were 6,000 of them, so bracing and brilliant that the moment of encountering that essay was seared into my memory with the sort of clarity that usually attends only the tragic or transformative occasions of life. Like a surgeon operating on soft tissue, you deftly dissected the arguments of so-called difference feminists until there wasn't much left of them. And I thought: good riddance. The Carol Gilligans and Deborah Tannens of the world were threatening to set us back, reinforcing stereotypes of "relational" women and "autonomous" men that have always been used to justify the exclusion of women from positions of power and authority, relegating us to a squishy and cuddly domestic sphere. At the time, I could think of no more dismal fate than that.

My thinking on these issues has changed a bit since then, and I wonder if yours has too. But leaving that aside for now, what made your essay so meaningful to me was that it was an unsparing critique of feminism that so clearly came from within feminism. To this day, the magazine walks a fine line between participating in movements and reporting on them—and I do believe there are good reasons to maintain some journalistic distance from movements with which we sympathize. Still, reading back into the magazine's archives in the 1970s, it seems to me that *The Nation* was not a forum in which the feminist movement hashed out its most contentious debates, at least until you became a regular contributor. There would be a critique, or one view on an internal feminist controversy, but not multiple perspectives, as the magazine has had on other matters such as war or partisan politics. Would you agree with that characterization?

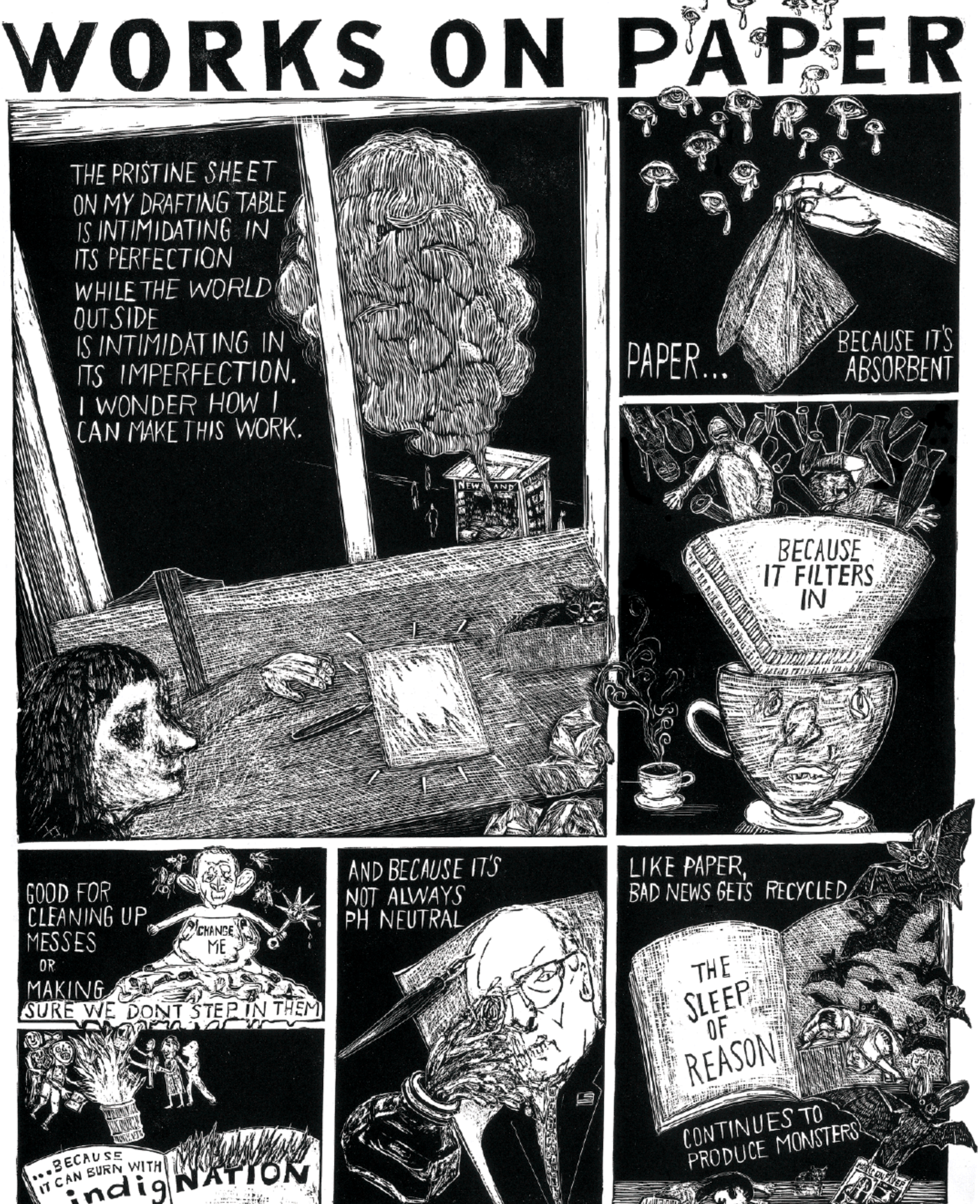
POLLITT: What you say about *The Nation* not having been a home for discussion among feminists is true, and it mirrors the situation of feminism within the liberal left. In both cases, there is a certain amount of attention given to "women's issues"—reproductive rights, equal pay, childcare, rape and domestic violence, and so on—and a certain amount of chagrin when women are belatedly discovered to be missing from a panel, forum, special section, masthead or table of contents. But when the topic is more general, feminist analysis disappears, and so do feminists. How can one think seriously about the economy, for example, without considering the way it is structured by gender and race? By narrowly defining what counts as a feminist topic, the liberal left pushed women into a corner and helped produce the very thing it most deplores—"identity politics."

How can one think seriously about the economy, for example, without considering the way it is structured by gender and race?

Considering how monumental and far-reaching and destabilizing and interesting the women's movement was in the late 1960s and '70s, it's surprising how little notice *The Nation* took of it during that period. As the movement progressed and the world changed, the coverage began to reflect those shifts, but it remained open for quite some time to woolly antifeminist critiques in the name of motherhood and "community." The nadir was probably Christopher Hitchens' slippery and arrogant 1989 column against abortion rights, after which he refused to engage with the response from women, including serious scholars of abortion rights like Linda Gordon. Much like the liberal left itself, *The Nation* tended to dismiss, rather than engage, feminist perspectives that challenged settled principles. Even before the Internet, it was probably not possible to ban pornography, and certainly not without wreaking havoc on freedom of speech, but did that have to mean that one had to ignore its misogyny? Against that, fortunately, one can set contributions from Ellen Willis, Vivian Gornick and many others. I'm proud to say that when I was the literary editor, back in the 1980s, I made it my mission to bring in women reviewers and cover books by women, especially on women's history and feminist issues. (We even did a feminist-books issue.) It wasn't even hard—there were fantastic (and famous!) women writers out there just longing to write for us.

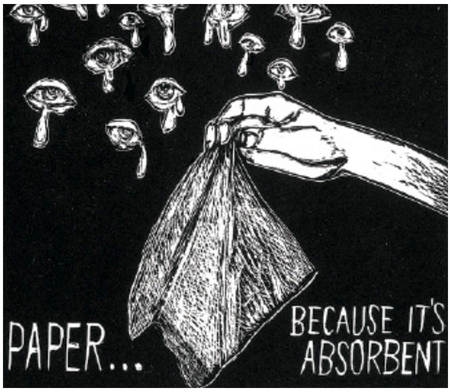
The great thing about feminism is that the debate moves on. You asked if I still stood by my attack on difference feminism. For the most part, I do think gender is socially shaped, and yet the position I staked out in that essay feels a little brittle to me now. Why did I make fun of quilts as an art form? I love quilts! There's a way in which denying essentialism can slip over into valuing women most when they are most "like men." But don't we deserve a little credit for the fact that in no society on earth do women commit more than a small fraction of murders?

REED: I still think you were right to point out the problems with essentialism (whether gender differences are ascribed to biology or social conditioning). But it's also true that, while there have been the Margaret Thatchers and Condoleezza Rices in recent history, women have, by and large, been more progressive than men as political and economic actors. Take the financial crisis of 2008: the villains were almost exclusively male, and the heroes (Sheila Bair, Elizabeth Warren, Meredith Whitney) disproportionately female. In politics, a gender gap persists that favors Democrats. Also, groups like Code Pink have shown how women can organize, as women, to protest war without reinforcing sexism. Why those gender differences exist (and whether they will last) is a complicated question, but given that they do, it's clear that progressive movements and media outlets should take women seriously, and not place feminists in a narrow "women's issues" box, and include a much larger number of female voices in discussions about economics, war and politics.


WORKS ON PAPER
THE PRISTINE SHEET ON MY DRAFTING TABLE IS INTIMIDATING IN ITS PERFECTION WHILE THE WORLD OUTSIDE IS INTIMIDATING IN ITS IMPERFECTION. I WONDER HOW I CAN MAKE THIS WORK.
PAPER... BECAUSE IT'S ABSORBENT
BECAUSE IT FILTERS IN
GOOD FOR CLEANING UP MESSES OR MAKING SURE WE DONT STEP IN THEM
CHANGE ME
...BECAUSE IT CAN BURN WITH indigNATION
AND BECAUSE IT'S NOT ALWAYS PH NEUTRAL
LIKE PAPER, BAD NEWS GETS RECYCLED
THE SLEEP OF REASON
CONTINUES TO PRODUCE MONSTERS
IN APPRECIATION OF 150 YEARS OF PAPER—UNCOATED, WITHOUT GLOSS
FRANCES JETTER

FRANCES JETTER

Let's turn this question around for a minute, though. The left has gotten a lot of flak for not being inclusive enough, but has feminism erred in drifting away from a focus on structural transformation? In general, the economic conditions of women deserve more attention, in *The Nation* and the rest of the progressive and feminist media—including the way they relate to broader economic problems such as inequality, poverty, the collapse of unions, privatization and the gutting of the welfare state. Why do we earn only seventy-eight cents to the male dollar? This statistic is often repeated but not widely understood. It's less about direct sex discrimination and more about the ways that women and mothers are tracked into poorly paid occupations, beset by disproportionate responsibilities at home, and denied the social supports they need in order to thrive in the workforce.



Pollitt: I love the revitalized feminism we've been seeing in the last five years or so, with its in-your-face energy and daring. But you're right: its emphasis is on sexual violence, reproductive rights, intersectionality and pop culture, and not so much on the basic economic steps without which equality will never be achieved. Beyond equal pay, there's quality, affordable childcare, universal preschool, paid parental leave, getting women into well-paid male-dominated fields, ending job discrimination against pregnant women and mothers, and adequate government assistance for poor and low-income families (dream on, I know). The Internet has spread feminism far and wide, especially among women in their 20s and even younger, but how many analyses of Kim Kardashian's behind does the world need? You see the turn toward pop culture in women's studies too, to the neglect of history, economics and the social sciences.

By the way, I wouldn't be so quick to dismiss outright sex discrimination as one cause of that seventy-eight cents on the dollar. Even when women do the same work as men (as Lilly Ledbetter did), they are paid less: from professors, surgeons and Hollywood moguls on down to waitresses, who make less than waiters not because they have kids, but because fancy restaurants hire men. Also, it's worth scrutinizing how women are nudged toward female-ghetto jobs virtually from birth—look at vocational tracks in high schools—and the ones who try to break into male-dominated fields, like construction or plumbing, are met with fierce resistance from both management and workers. There is actually a lower percentage of women in the blue-collar trades today than in the 1970s.

Women have, by and large, been more progressive than men as political and economic actors.

Fun fact: in some of those countries we'd love to resemble, with daycare and a big social-welfare state, the pay gap is still pretty big: around 15 percent in Sweden, Denmark and France.

Reed: I confess to being shocked when I learned that despite all that glorious state-subsidized daycare and lavish-sounding (to me) maternity leave, Scandinavian women don't have it all—they don't even rise to top positions as often as we do here in the United States, where, with less than 15 percent of executive positions held by women, we don't set the bar particularly high. While universal childcare and better family policies in the United States would give women a huge boost, apparently they won't solve everything. Sheryl Sandberg endured a fusillade of criticism for focusing too much on individual behavior and workplace attitudes and not enough on public policy in *Lean In*, but perhaps she had a point. There's a lot of work for feminists to do, and some of it does involve asking for promotions and raises, speaking up more in meetings, mentoring female colleagues at work, and challenging men to do their share of the heavy lifting at home (when there is a man at home).

Pollitt: I hear you. There is something strange about a feminism that routinely attacks women who succeed in the business of America, which, as Calvin Coolidge did not quite say, is business. (It's OK to make zillions in fashion or pop music, no matter how frivolous or negative the message.) It's as if, for all its modernism and rebelliousness, feminism retains the idea that women belong in their traditional fields: the helping professions, entertainment, nonprofits, luxury goods. And even in those areas, if a woman gets too successful, there are plenty of others who will tear her down, as Lena Dunham discovered.

Just try suggesting, however, that highly educated women who give up interesting, well-paid work to stay home with their kids embody a dependence on men that feminism has critiqued since forever (and, not coincidentally, make it easier for their husbands to advance over working-mother colleagues, who rarely have househusbands to free them from domestic duties), and—well! Then it's choice feminism to the rescue. If a heart surgeon wants to abandon the operating table to raise heirloom chickens in Brooklyn, that's her right—and how dare you raise an eyebrow? You might as well say that Miley Cyrus isn't just a free spirit who happens to enjoy fellating a giant inflatable penis.

Fortunately, there are more positive developments afoot. In many past struggles, from the labor movement to the civil-rights movement to the fight against colonialism, women were asked to put aside their rights and needs in pursuit of some supposedly more important goal. Today, thanks partly to feminists of color, there's a more sophisticated understanding of how struggles are connected. In the abortion fight, the reproductive-justice framework—launched twenty years ago and pioneered by SisterSong, the feminist collective of women of color—is replacing the pro-choice framework: it's not enough for women to be able to end a pregnancy; they also need to be able to choose to have kids, and to be able to raise them well. That means childcare,

TESTIMONIALS

MAYOR
BILL de BLASIO

We are better people as Americans because of the *Nation* magazine.

healthcare, good jobs, safe housing, racial equality and much more. It's rather daring to use reproduction as the political lens with which to focus all these different forms of oppression, from abstinence-only sex-ed to air pollution in poor neighborhoods to the astronomical rates at which men of color (and, increasingly, women of color) are imprisoned. Historically, after all, reproductive issues were not central to the larger progressive cause: they were a "women's issue" or a matter of "health." Reproductive justice opens up a whole new way of conceptualizing progressive politics, in which women—especially women of color—are at the center.

And yet, even as our analysis becomes smarter and more inclusive, reality remains resistant. Even in our own world of words—books, magazines, media—men dominate the mastheads and bylines. The women's literary organization VIDA has been keeping track for the last six years, with mostly dismal findings, including here at *The Nation*. As you look back at your sixteen fabulous years here, Betsy, what's your sense of how the future is shaping up for women writers and editors?

REED: I think *The Nation* has done a good job covering and reflecting these developments in feminism—looking at mass incarceration and the "war on drugs" through a feminist lens, for example, or examining the way the politics of austerity affects women. However, it's true that *The Nation*'s bylines remain as male-dominated as those at other magazines, even those less explicitly committed to the ideals of feminism. As an editor and feminist, I take this problem very seriously, but I believe the reasons for it are complicated—certainly more complicated than sheer sexism in editorial decision-making. After all, *The Nation* has had a woman at the helm for twenty years, Katrina vanden Heuvel, who is deeply committed to the cause of gender equality.

One issue is that male writers are often eager to present themselves as experts even when they're not, while women writers often gravitate to coverage of women's issues (narrowly defined) rather than, say, economics and foreign policy. Certainly there are glowing exceptions, such as our very own Naomi Klein. But still, I think it holds as a generalization, and when you're editing a general-interest magazine, that creates a challenge, because you need to offer diversified coverage of a wide range of fields. So an important, though long-term, job for editors is to encourage young women writers to tackle subjects they might not initially think they'd be inclined toward. In other words, pigeonholing women writers as feminist writers is actually one of the *worst* things you could do.

The good news is that, as you suggest, there is a veritable explosion of groundbreaking journalism being done right now by women on a broad range of subjects. Sometimes that's happening at outlets that might surprise *Nation* readers—at BuzzFeed, for example. The "old media" have some traditions very much worth preserving: that of intellectual exploration by writers who derive their authority from years of scholarship, and who render seemingly obscure topics interesting to a broad audience through their unusual depth of knowledge and

POETRY ARCHIVE

DECEMBER 28, 1964

Present

Frank O'Hara

The stranded gulch
below Grand Central
the gentle purr of cab tires in snow
and hidden stars
tears on the windshield
torn inexorably away in whining motion
and the dark thoughts which surround neon

in Union Square I see you for a moment
red green yellow searchlights cutting through
falling flakes, head bent to the wind
wet and frowning, melancholy, trying

I know perfectly well where you walk to
and that we'll meet in even greater darkness
later and will be warm
so our cross
of paths will not be just muddy footprints
in the morning
not like celestial bodies'
yearly passes, nothing pushes us away
from each other
even now I can lean
forward across the square and see
your surprised grey look become greener
as I wipe the city's moisture from
your face
and you shake the snow
off onto my shoulder, light as a breath
where the quarrels and vices of
estranged companions weighed so bitterly
and accidentally
before, I saw you on
the floor of my life walking slowly
that time in summer rain stranger and
nearer
to become a way of feeling
that is not painful casual or diffuse
and seems to explore some peculiar insight
of the heavens for its favorite bodies
in the mixed-up air

clarity of insight. At their best, magazines like *The Nation* and, yes, the old *New Republic* would feature writers who do that. But at our worst, we exclude from "authority" those voices who are already marginalized in the world, thereby reinforcing their marginalization. What's exciting is the opportunity that *The Nation* has to carry its best traditions into the digital age, while also embracing the most liberating possibilities of new media.

Pollitt: I too find the new-media landscape exciting. Plenty of blather and posturing, but also so much fresh and spirited writing by people who would never have had a career in the old days. Unfortunately, whatever space opens up for women writers in the world of journalism, the coming years are probably going to be quite difficult for women in the United States. Republicans are in charge of the House and Senate and have complete control of twenty-four state governments. It's hard to see how women are going to make significant advances when the levers of government are so firmly in the hands of people eager to push them back in the name of the free market, or Jesus, or both.

Electoral politics isn't everything, of course. Perhaps we will see a renewed, radical grassroots women's movement jumping from the Internet to the real world, with mass demonstrations and protests, a vivid and attractive alternative culture, a burgeoning of community activism and so on. It's interesting, though, that the most recent example of that kind of organizing—Occupy—had very little specifically feminist consciousness or content.

I try to take hope where I find it. Obamacare has provided healthcare, including birth control with no co-pay, to millions of women, and recent increases in the minimum wage will benefit millions of women too. That's wonderful. (Although behind these victories lie years of strenuous organizing; I don't mean to imply that they were gifts from benevolent politicians.) There's always the inspiring example of the LGBT movement for equal marriage, equal rights and public respect. Some of the current attempts to destigmatize abortion—through personal storytelling, for example—are very much like the attempt to defuse homophobia by coming out.

Just having the difficult conversations is important, too: about how to live together and think together in a world in which white men are no longer the automatic arbiters of everything, even if some of them haven't quite accepted that yet. *The Nation* is the perfect place to have these exchanges. Let's hope it doesn't take another 150 years for our writers and readers to figure it all out! **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

HARRY TRUMAN

1950

I have not always agreed with *The Nation*, but I have never doubted its integrity. I hope that its voice will be lifted for many years to come in behalf of the causes in which it believes—even if they may be unpopular at the time.

Cuba Libre

Covering the island has been a central concern for The Nation *since the beginning—producing scoops, aiding diplomacy, and pushing for a change in policy.*

PETER KORNBLUH

On May 9, 1961, just a few weeks after the CIA-led debacle at the Bay of Pigs, John F. Kennedy met with a group of newspaper editors at the White House to chastise them for exposing government secrets. A *New York Times* article headlined "U.S. Helps Train an Anti-Castro Force at Secret Guatemalan Air-Ground Base," published three months before the invasion, was a case in point, the president argued.

"I noted that the information had previously appeared in *The Nation*," *Times* managing editor Turner Catledge recalled saying to the president in protest.

"But it wasn't news until it appeared in the *Times*," Kennedy replied.

Of course, *The Nation*'s November 19, 1960, report on covert preparations to invade Cuba *was* news. More important, it was an act of responsible political journalism. Not only did *The Nation* scoop the rest of the American press; it issued a direct challenge to "all U.S. news media with correspondents in Guatemala" to further expose the CIA's counterrevolutionary operations—a challenge that the *Times* couldn't ignore. "Public pressure," as *The Nation*'s editors declared with prescient clarity five months before the failed paramilitary assault, "should be brought to bear upon the Administration to abandon this dangerous and hare-brained project."

The Nation's pre-emptive effort to inform and mobilize public opinion before the Bay of Pigs is illustrative of its long history of coverage and editorial positions on Cuba. Again and again, the magazine has run groundbreaking stories and potent editorials to influence the public discourse over Cuba and US foreign policy. At the height of the Cold War, when the Cuban Revolution became a central concern, *The Nation* even played a key role in back-channel diplomacy to improve US-Cuba relations. Looking back over the course of a century and a half of reports, analysis and editorials on Cuba, it is clear that *The Nation*'s brand of responsible, progressive journalism not only helped to shape history; it has helped to make it as well.

Just two weeks after its inaugural issue, *The Nation* published its first Cuba story, calling for "the extinction of slavery in this island."

EARLY COVERAGE

Just two weeks after its inaugural issue, on July 20, 1865, *The Nation* published its first Cuba story. "Emancipation in Cuba" promoted a plan for "the important matter of the extinction of slavery in this island"—a moral, social and political issue that culminated with Spain decreeing the abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1886.

As the Cuban insurrection against Spanish colonial rule escalated at the end of the nineteenth century, *The Nation* opposed the rush to intervention, condemning the propaganda of the "yellow journals" calling for the dispatch of US troops to the island. But the magazine recognized the inevitability of US involvement to end the civil strife and bloodshed in Cuba's war for independence. "Our declared purpose is to pacify the island, to make it free and independent, to establish a stable government and then to take hands off," the editors wrote in "The War and After," a commentary published on April 28, 1898. Three years later, the imperial-minded McKinley administration imposed the Platt Amendment on the Cubans as the price of their "independence"—a law bestowing extraordinary US power over the island's future, including the eternal right to intervene. *The Nation* insisted that the amendment and its incorporation into the Cuban Constitution "do not bind anybody" to future incursions of US force or military occupation.

Over the next six decades, as Cuba evolved from a US protectorate into a playground for corporate America, the Mafia, and the rich and famous, *The Nation* followed events on the Caribbean island closely. Its coverage drew heavily on the work of its veteran Latin America correspondent, Carleton Beals, who filed his first Cuba story, "American Diplomacy in Cuba," in January 1934. His last dispatch, on US efforts to expel Cuba from the Organization of American States, came twenty-eight years later, in January 1962. In between, Beals's coverage of the Cuban Revolution kept *Nation* readers apprised of the history-changing events on the island and the larger-than-life leadership of Fidel Castro.

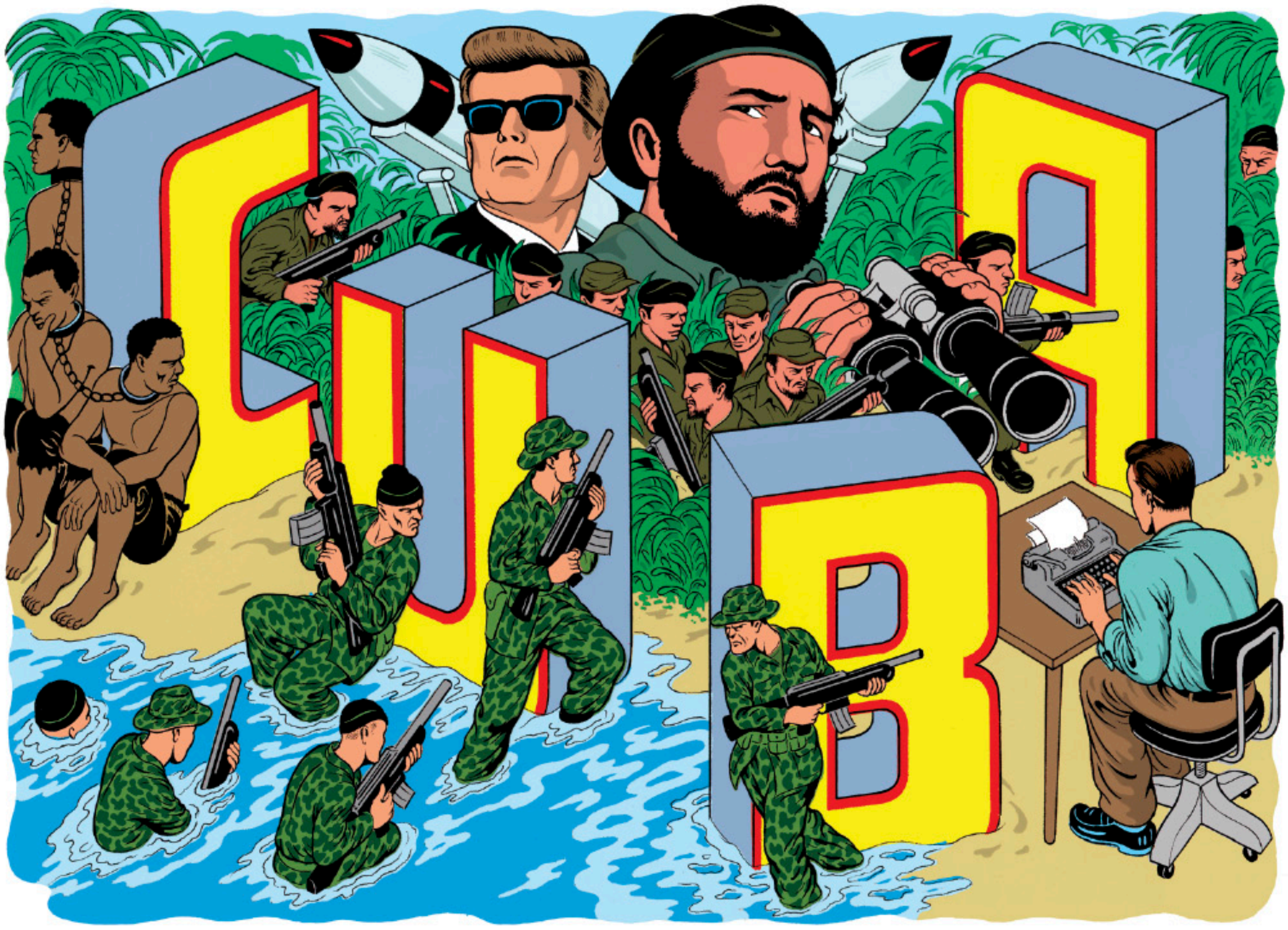
***The Nation*'s ability to scoop the rest of the US media on the Bay of Pigs planning owed much to the sharp ear of editor Carey McWilliams.**

"These are days of great promises and great hopes," Beals reported from Cuba following Castro's triumphant march into Havana in January 1959. Fidel's "messianic resistance" to the US-supported regime of Fulgencio Batista, according to *The Nation*'s first post-revolution story, had "inflamed the hearts not only of his own people, but of people all around the globe." Beals, who had covered the revolt of Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua in the late 1920s for *The Nation*, understood the implications of the Cuban Revolution for US hegemony in the region. Castro's success was "likely to alter our relations with the countries to the south," he noted, "and to usher in a new phase of fuller Latin American independence."

THE BAY OF PIGS SCOOP

An independent Cuba establishing a model for the rest of Latin America to follow was clearly not what the US government had in mind. By the end of the revolution's first year, according to declassified CIA records, US officials had issued recommendations to "neutralize" Fidel Castro and begun the initial planning for an invasion.

The Nation's ability to scoop the rest of the US media on the Bay of Pigs planning owed much to the political connections and sharp ear of editor Carey McWil-



JACKIE NO-NAME

liams. In November 1960, McWilliams received a call from Paul Baran, a close friend at Stanford University, who informed the *Nation* editor that a colleague named Ronald Hilton had just returned from Guatemala with considerable information about a secret CIA base where exile forces were being trained to invade Cuba. As McWilliams later recounted in an oral history: “So of course I phoned Hilton immediately, and he told me what he had observed…. So I did a piece—a long sort of unsigned editorial—about this and said that if this is true, and it does seem to be true, it ought to be investigated immediately because this [was] a piece of prime folly.”

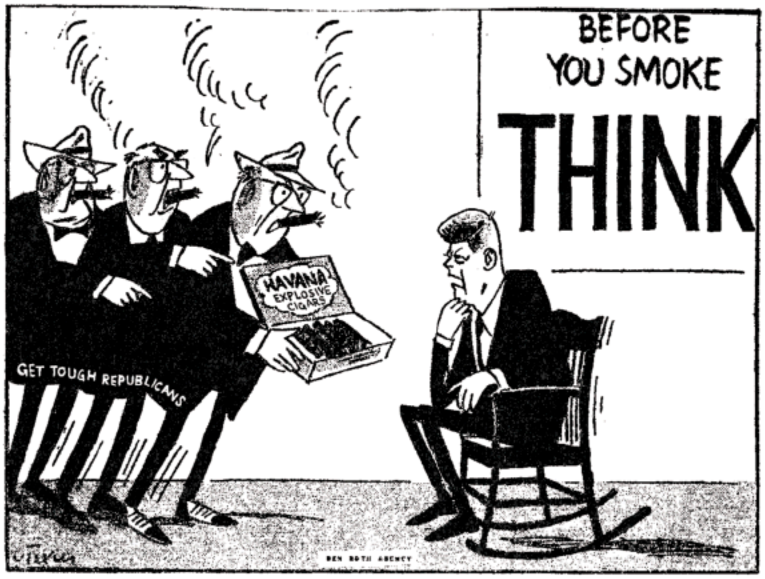
The Nation’s editorial, “Are We Training Cuban Guerrillas?,” ran on November 19, 1960—just days after Kennedy’s narrow election win over Richard Nixon. The story reported on details, published in the Guatemalan press but ignored in the US media, of a $1 million compound that the CIA had purchased in the countryside to train Cuban exiles, as well as the televised admission of Guatemala’s president that the base existed. “We feel an obligation to bring the subject to public attention,” McWilliams wrote.

The story landed on the desk of *New York Times* deputy managing editor Clifton Daniel, who assigned a reporter from the Mexico bureau to check it out. When the *Times* published its front-page story on January 10, 1961, it prompted an emergency damage-control meeting between Dwight Eisenhower (then in the final weeks of his presidency) and top CIA, Defense and State Department officials. According to a secret memorandum of the conversation: “The President decided that we should make no statement and continue to refuse to comment.” At the State Department, a spokesman claimed to know “absolutely nothing about” a base in Guatemala training Cuban exiles.

On April 7, 1961, the *Times* ran another story, headlined “Anti-Castro Units Trained to Fight at Florida Bases.” In contrast to the *Nation* editors, who hoped to stop an act of US intervention through aggressive reporting, the *Times* editors censored their own story in the name of national security, eliminating all references to the CIA and the projected date of the invasion, and reducing the headline from a banner exposé to one narrow column. Ten days later, the CIA-led paramilitary brigade deployed at Playa Girón in the middle of the night; the exile force was defeated and captured by Castro’s forces within seventy-two hours. “If you had printed more about the operation,” Kennedy subsequently admitted to Catledge, “you would have saved us from a colossal mistake.”

THE NATION’S ROLE IN “METADIPLOMACY”

“IF OUR LEADERS ARE WISE,” *THE NATION* OPINED IN an insightful post-invasion editorial, “they will accept defeat—and not make the same mistake in some other form.” Ignoring that advice, Kennedy authorized Operation Mongoose to exact Washington’s revenge on Castro for standing up to the Colossus of the North. Continuing US aggression led directly to the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis, as Castro understood that a formal alliance with the Soviet Union was critical to deter Washington’s efforts to roll back the Cuban Revolution.



As Kennedy began to explore a new approach toward Cuba, *The Nation* played a key role in the secret efforts to restore normal relations.

In the critical aftermath of the missile crisis, *The Nation* distinguished itself from the mainstream media’s fawning coverage of Kennedy’s supposedly implacable courage in facing down the Soviets. On November 17, 1962, the magazine ran a comprehensive analysis by California sociologist Charles D. Bolton on the postcrisis agenda of the peace movement and the need for Kennedy to learn the lessons of near-nuclear Armageddon.

Perhaps Bolton’s call for reforming US policy toward Cuba was included in the president’s briefing papers, because in early 1963, Kennedy began to explore a new “sweet approach” toward Cuba. As the president re-evaluated the option of peaceful co-existence with the Cuban Revolution, *The Nation* played a key—and colorful—role in the first secret US efforts to restore normal relations with Castro.

In early spring 1963, McWilliams assigned Gertrude Samuels, a well-known writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, to profile James Donovan, the lawyer who had successfully negotiated the release of more than 1,000 prisoners from the Bay of Pigs in the weeks following the missile crisis. Posing as a private citizen while secretly working for the Kennedy administration, Donovan was in the midst of a new round of shuttle diplomacy with Cuba. His mission: to negotiate the release of more than two dozen US citizens (among them three CIA operatives) imprisoned on the island for various counterrevolutionary activities, and to open the door for better bilateral relations.

Given its widely respected progressive reputation, Donovan believed, *The Nation* could assist with these delicate negotiations. “I wish to tell you what a pleasure it has been to cooperate with Gertrude Samuels on the article concerning my Cuban mission which she is preparing,” he wrote to McWilliams on March 28, 1963, a week before he returned to Havana to meet with Castro again.

VICTOR WEISZ

In April, Donovan traveled to Cuba carrying the page proofs of the forthcoming profile in *The Nation*, titled "How Metadiplomacy Works: James Donovan and Castro." Samuels's article highlighted the potential for a prisoner release to set the stage "for some sort of conciliation between the American and Cuban people." It quoted Donovan as stating "that in these negotiations there does lie the greatest hope of creating some equitable solution to the problems now affecting relations between the two countries."

On the island, Donovan deftly used the *Nation* story to dangle the prospect of normalized relations as the ultimate prize. During an all-night meeting that lasted from 2:15 to 6:30 AM, he even read the entire article out loud to Fidel. As Donovan told Castro, the article's impending publication, along with other articles in mainstream magazines such as *Look* and *Life*, reflected an evolution of the US position on relations with the Cuban Revolution. When Castro asked what the political impact of the *Nation* article would be, Donovan responded that "it would be immediately studied by intellectuals, liberals, editorial writers, and various molders of public opinion," and "that it would also be studied in government circles." He then paid a major compliment to the magazine: "I said that I thought that whereas the articles in *Life* and *Look* were reflecting general public opinion, the article in *The Nation* was one attempting to lead public opinion."

Castro was impressed. The Cuban leader "thought that this article was excellent, that it showed wisdom," Donovan recalled. Castro immediately ordered the article translated into Russian so he could share it with the Soviet ambassador in Havana. Most important, he agreed to a prisoner release in exchange for four Cubans imprisoned in the United States, on the assumption that it would open the door to talks on better bilateral ties. "Now that you've shown me the article in *The Nation*," Castro said, "I'm prepared to take a chance on your analysis of the situation and your prophecies on what should happen."

A couple of weeks later, Donovan returned to Havana to escort the released US citizens, including the CIA agents, back to Florida. Secretly, through various back channels, Kennedy and Castro pursued a dialogue toward better relations from that point on—right up to the day the president was assassinated in Dallas.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

AT THE TIME, NOBODY IN THE UNITED STATES knew that Donovan had explicitly used Samuels's *Nation* article as a negotiating tool with Castro. But at *The Nation*, there was a sense of real contribution. In a private letter to Donovan, McWilliams wrote, Samuels "told me that you had reported to her that our editorials and her article had been helpful to you in your negotiations. It goes without saying that we were very pleased to hear this." Ever the intrepid editor, McWilliams tried to enlist Donovan to become a *Nation* writer. "I would like to have a chance to chat with you," he wrote, according to a May 1, 1963, letter on *Nation* stationery, about "doing an article for us over your own signature some time."

The Nation.
CUBA
WHAT'S NEXT?

Castro was impressed with the *Nation* article, saying: "Now that you've shown me [it], I'm prepared to take a chance on your analysis of the situation."

Donovan never wrote for *The Nation* on Cuba, but a slew of other prominent activists, advocates, analysts, strategists, academics, politicians and reporters did. Over the decades, the magazine ran major stories by authoritative writers like Saul Landau, Gore Vidal, Arthur Miller, Herbert Matthews, Harry Maurer, Penny Lernoux, David Corn, Tom Hayden, Walter LaFeber, Maurice Zeitlin, John Spicer Nichols, Peter Winn, Julia E. Sweig, William M. LeoGrande and Ned Sublette, among many others. The magazine published reports and opinions from former prime ministers like Michael Manley of Jamaica; former senators like George McGovern; and former diplomats like Wayne S. Smith, who served as chief of the US Interests Section in Havana during the Carter administration and became a leading advocate of an accommodation with Castro.

Their stories covered the Cuban economy, politics, culture, history and international relations, but the magazine kept a laser-like focus on the need for a new US policy. When Fidel Castro fell ill with diverticulitis in mid-2006 and passed the reins of power to his brother Raul, *Nation* publisher and editor Katrina vanden Heuvel decided to devote an entire issue to the political changes on the island and the future of US-Cuban relations. Published in May 2007, the special issue, titled "Cuba: What's Next?," contained seven articles—among them the first in a respected magazine to identify the Cuban Five as "counterterrorism agents"—examining the changing of the guard in Cuba and the potential for changing course on Cuba policy in the United States. "The next occupant of the White House will have an unusual opportunity to bring US policy toward Cuba into the twenty-first century," the lead editorial stated, adding: "We agree…that this is 'the dumbest policy on the face of the earth.' The time has come to change it."

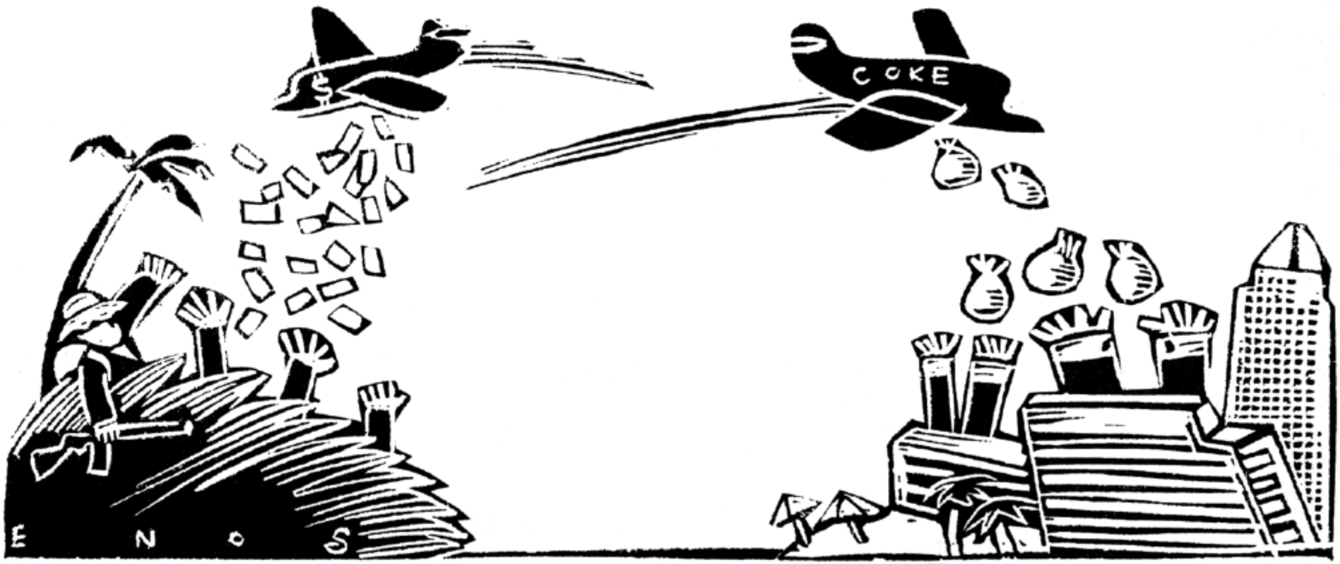
As a candidate for president in 2008, Barack Obama appeared to agree. "We've been engaged in a failed policy with Cuba for the last fifty years, and we need to change it," he declared during the campaign. Throughout Obama's presidency, *Nation* articles and editorials reminded him of this pledge. Indeed, on October 20, 2014, the magazine published an article titled "Obama's Last Chance on Cuba," arguing that if the president "really wants to revamp fifty years of failed policy he'd better act soon, because time is running out."

On December 17, 2014, Obama acted; US policy is now being radically revamped. As this dramatic effort to bring peace and reconciliation to US-Cuba relations moves forward, *The Nation*'s reporting and analysis will continue to "lead public opinion" and, in so doing, help shape this remarkable history as it is being made—today and in the future. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

JULIAN BOND

I long ago pledged allegiance to one *Nation* under Victor Navasky and his worthy successor, Katrina vanden Heuvel.



How I Got That Story

"Stay to the end...and read everything": Reporting the Iran/Contra scandal taught me everything I needed to know about covering Washington.

DAVID CORN

IT WAS A LOVELY, CRISP AUTUMN MORNING IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL in November 1987, and I was strolling through a well-tended park on Capitol Hill and feeling quite privileged. I had only been in the city for ten months, as a correspondent for this magazine, and I was about to be one of the few people in town to obtain a copy of the hottest document produced by Washington in years: the final report of the House and Senate committees investigating the Iran/Contra affair. This scandal was a doozy: President Ronald Reagan had secretly (and arguably illegally) sold weapons to the terrorist-supporting regime of Iran in order to free American hostages, and his crew had used the ill-gotten proceeds to secretly (and arguably illegally) finance the not-so-covert guerrilla army attempting to overthrow the socialist government of Nicaragua.

This whole nutty—and Constitution-defying—episode had been much in the news for the past year, hobbling the Reagan administration and putting government officials at risk of criminal prosecution. Covering the scandal had been a journalistic baptism for me. When I arrived in Washington at the start of that year, the great journalist I.F. Stone—who decades earlier had been my predecessor as Washington correspondent for *The Nation*—offered me a valuable piece of advice: stay to the end of any congressional hearing you attend and read everything. That lesson served me well as I reported on this absurd and troubling affair and learned how to cover Washington.

There were sub-scandals and side scandals galore, but the major news outlets didn't report any of this.

Over several months, the Iran/Contra joint committees had held long hearings in the ornate hearing room of the Russell Senate Office Building—which had previously been the site of hearings on Watergate and on the sinking of the *Titanic*—and scores of reporters had crowded into this grand room to chronicle the historic sessions. (In young-journo heaven, I found myself seated next to the eccentrically erudite Murray Kempton and the passionately perceptive Lars-Erik Nelson.) Most of the journalists representing the established media outlets focused on the same slice of the tale: What did the president (and his top men) know about the sordid deals with Tehran and the Contras? This was an important question, but it was not the only one.

The Iran/Contra probe had opened the lid on a large trunk of assorted skulduggeries, including probable CIA violations of the congressional ban on assistance to the Contras and, even more outrageous, CIA support of the Contras involved in drug trafficking. Yet much of the establishment media covered the scandal in the same way they chronicled politics: Who's up, who's down? The testimony of Lieut. Col. Oliver North, a National Security Council official, was reported like a boxing match: Who got in the best shots?

Still, the committee's investigators had been sifting through a ton of muck. And at the end of most hearings, late in the afternoon, after the second-tier witnesses had testified and many reporters had fled to file stories about the punches thrown or received, staffers would hand out stacks of documents: hearing exhibits that might or might not have been referred to during testimony. Only a few reporters bothered to collect the papers and pore through them. (This was before the days when such material would be posted on a website and immediately crowd-combed.)

I stayed to the end each day and read through the documents later at night. (I didn't have cable and thus possessed plenty of time.) Those papers were often treasure maps for stories untold by the hearings—journalistic gold. One document referred to North possibly signing up mercenaries fresh out of jail. (A committee staffer told me that a British mercenary recruited by North may have accidentally blown up a Nicaraguan hospital.) Another indicated that North and Adm. John Poindexter, who had been Reagan's national security adviser, had plotted to sink a ship

RANDALL ENOS

carrying weapons to Nicaragua. I learned that the Justice Department had determined that CIA assets in Central America had committed “fraud” by using US funds earmarked for humanitarian assistance to purchase weapons. High-ranking Justice Department officials monitored—and probably leaned on—a Miami-based federal investigation into Contra gunrunning. And the Customs Service had killed a federal probe of a White House–sanctioned but secret (and likely illegal) sale of high-tech speedboats to the Contras. In other words, there were sub-scandals and side scandals galore. But consumers of the major news outlets were not told any of this.

I quickly concluded that it can be journalistically productive to zig while other reporters are zagging, and that off-the-beaten-path excavation often yields riches, for too much of the media spends its time covering only the official proceedings of the nation’s capital (even if occasionally in a critical fashion).

Which brings me back to that autumnal morning. In the room where the Iran/Contra hearings had been held, staffers were handing out the final report, and there was a press conference. As the chief investigators took questions, reporters focused on the who-knew-what-when queries. (The committees had concluded that the Reagan White House had put the Constitution on hold to wage covert war in Central America and to barter with the mullahs of Tehran, but it could not determine the extent of Reagan’s personal involvement in the clandestine effort to aid the Contras.) In the midst of the questioning, a journalist from an alternative weekly asked, “Did the committees investigate the allegations of Contra drug dealing?” Before Arthur Liman, the chief counsel of the Senate Iran/Contra committee, could reply, a reporter from *The New York Times* loudly sneered, “C’mon, ask a serious question.” And Liman, perhaps taking his cue from the *Times* reporter, moved on. I protested: Why not answer the question? But no other reporter joined in.

This was not a fanciful query. In 1985, two Associated Press journalists, Robert Parry and Brian Barger, had reported that some US-backed Contras had been involved with drug trafficking. And the pair had followed it up with additional reports. The Iran/Contra committees, though, largely steered clear of this dicey matter. (The Republicans—and a few Democratic supporters—were not eager to tarnish the rebels they had touted as freedom fighters.) Consequently, the Contra-CIA cocaine connection did not become a headline-generating controversy in Washington, even with Nancy Reagan pushing her “Just Say No” antidrug crusade. It was the biggest scandal that never was.

Even when a Senate subcommittee chaired by John Kerry mounted an investigation and concluded in 1989 that administration officials had turned a blind eye as individual Contras and Contra suppliers smuggled drugs, the major media essentially yawned. I’d reported that Kerry’s probe had gathered evidence proving the Contras had obtained financial support from drug trafficking and traffickers. This was cover-story material for *The Nation*, but it generated scant attention from the bigfoot media.

Years would go by before the story hit the front pages—after Gary Webb, a reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News*, wrote a flawed series in 1996 that tied a Los Angeles drug ring to the

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Contras. Webb overstated the case and the CIA's links to this band, but he nevertheless ignited a firestorm—as recounted in the recent film *Kill the Messenger*. Although his reporting spurred a flood of media coverage, much of it consisted of denunciations of Webb by the mainstream outlets, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Once more, the real story of Reagan's support for drug-tainted Contras escaped serious notice in most of the media.

TESTIMONIALS

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER

I began to read *The Nation* at age 12, in 1938. I have been with it, then, for half of its lifetime and most of mine. Its large and steady contribution to the education of successive generations (my late daughter was an intern) has been to combine the depiction of immediate events with a historical perspective. Culture and politics, for *The Nation*, remain inseparable. I am sure that my younger contemporaries are worthy of the inheritance, and that the next seventy-five years will see *The Nation* rise to the challenge.

Two years later, in 1998, the CIA's inspector general released a report that the agency had undertaken in response to Webb's series. The two-volume document maintained that significant details in Webb's reporting were wrong but confirmed the big picture: the CIA had supported the Contras even as it collected "allegations or information indicating that contra-related organizations and individuals were involved in drug trafficking."

When the report came out, the CIA's confession produced barely a peep in Washington, which was now obsessed with the scandal prompted by President Bill Clinton's liaison with Monica Lewinsky. Perhaps today, when such a document would be disseminated quickly and widely on the Internet and then promoted by partisans, it would be difficult to smother this kind of story with neglect. Yet the saga remains an important reminder: the big story in Washington is not always the biggest news.

The CIA's admission of Contra drug trafficking produced barely a peep in Washington, which was now obsessed with the scandal involving Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.

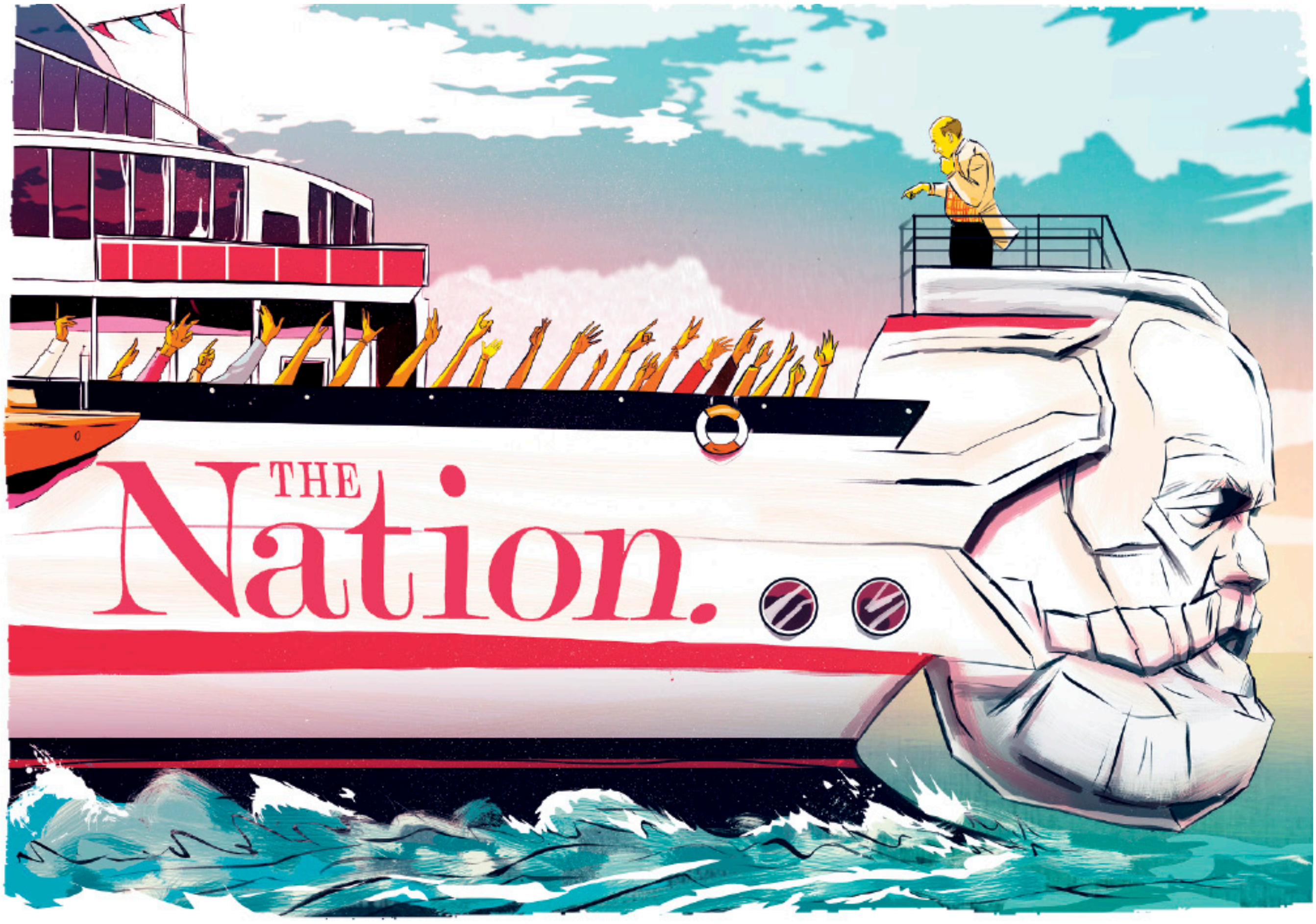
As I covered Washington for *The Nation* in the years after the Iran/Contra hearings, I tried to live by these lessons: look where other reporters aren't looking and avoid groupthink.

In 2000, I found a helluva tale about GOP presidential candidate George W. Bush: during an unsuccessful run for Congress in 1978, Bush—who was now running as an anti-abortion candidate—had told a local reporter that he favored, as the newspaper paraphrased his remark, "leaving up to a woman and her doctor the abortion question." (When I asked for comment, Bush's presidential campaign, in a rare act, called me back immediately—and insisted that the newspaper article was a "misinterpretation.") This story drew little attention and did not spark much controversy. Unfortunately, that came with the territory when one worked for a non-mainstream outfit.

A few years later, *The Nation* was positioned even further from the mainstream with its opposition to the invasion of Iraq. Pack journalism ruled Washington in those days, with few reporters bothering to question the oppressive consensus in favor of the war. At dinner parties, at watering holes, in greenrooms, most journalists accepted the prevailing line, often acknowledging that it was the safest position. The motto appeared to be: "Better to be wrong along with everyone else than to challenge the conventional wisdom." (One high-profile reporter told me, "If Tom Friedman thinks we should invade, that's good enough for me.") Though some top-notch journalists, such as my pal and *Nation* colleague Christopher Hitchens (who was sharp-eyed on so many other fronts), had reached the unfortunate conclusion that war was necessary, most were merely yielding to the dominant political culture—and abandoning a primary mission of journalism: to question power. Never was the need for independent journalism so keenly demonstrated.

Following the invasion, the mainstream media finally got around to vetting Bush's WMD allegations—a tad too late. I managed to kick up a fuss with an online column after anonymous administration officials revealed, in a leak to conservative journalist Bob Novak, that Valerie Plame—the wife of former ambassador Joseph Wilson, a leading critic of the Iraq War—worked for the CIA. Though the Bush administration's war on Wilson was widely known by reporters throughout Washington, I reported that this leak might have violated a federal law prohibiting government officials from revealing undercover CIA agents. Ultimately, an independent counsel would investigate the leak, nearly indicting Bush über-strategist Karl Rove and winning the conviction of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the chief of staff for Vice President Dick Cheney. (Bush later commuted Libby's sentence.)

Important stories often hide in plain sight. But a journalist still has to be looking for them. And such stories are more easily found when a reporter is given the chance to plow untilled fields. In 2012, several reporters were poking into Bain Capital, the private-equity firm once run by GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney, trying to determine whether some of its takeover deals had prompted firings and the shipping of jobs overseas. That was a worthy journalistic task, but few reporters were scrutinizing a large investment fund associated with Bain that had purchased stakes in foreign companies created to exploit the exportation of US manufacturing jobs. I dove in, examined a host of public filings, and produced a series of pieces for *Mother Jones* reporting on Romney investments that ran counter to his promise that he would not let China steal US jobs. The articles received a bit of notice, but not a huge amount. Yet while searching for the truth about these deals, I discovered an online video snippet posted anonymously that showed Romney discussing a trip he had taken to a Chinese factory—and that clip led me to a video that captured Romney denigrating 47 percent of Americans as freeloaders who do not take "personal responsibility and care for their lives." This scoop had come twenty-five years after I had covered the Iran/Contra scandal. But despite all the profound changes in the media landscape during the intervening decades, the bottom line remained the same: the digging's the thing. In Washington, with or without a mainstream-media-recognized scandal, there is always somewhere to dig. **150th**



Cruising to Port

How The Nation*'s "Deadline Poet" learned to stop worrying and love our readers.*

CALVIN TRILLIN

ON A *NATION* CRUISE, THE MARITIME ADVENTURE I USUALLY REFER to as "Lefties at Sea," I used to take it for granted that some of the guests were not completely comfortable with my presence as a panelist. Although I've been writing for *The Nation* since 1978—that's when the then-editor became known as "the wily and parsimonious Victor S. Navasky" for offering me a per-column fee of "something in the high two figures"—there has always been some feeling among longtime subscribers that I am not completely, well, on board. For years, after all, I answered questions about why I wrote for *The Nation* by saying, "It's the closest magazine to my house." In my column, I pointed out that *The Nation* is published only every other week during the summer months, even though the downtrodden are oppressed every day of the year. On a television talk-show once, I recalled an exchange I'd had with a newspaper reporter who, during the promotional tour for a collection of my *Nation* columns, asked me to describe the magazine.

"Pinko," I said, after some reflection.

"Surely you have more to say about it than that," the reporter countered.

"Yes," I replied. "It's a pinko magazine printed on very cheap paper—the sort of magazine where, if you Xerox one of your pieces, the Xerox is a lot better than the original."

A week or so later, I got a ferocious letter from a *Nation* reader who had been outraged that I would say something on national television that gave comfort to the enemy. I wasn't surprised. I'd always taken it for granted that one portion of the readership was troubled not only by my smart-aleck remarks, but also by the suspicion that I was the sort of person who had let the agony of the Scottsboro Boys fade from his memory. As a stand-in for those readers, I included a character in my column called Harold the Committed, who was always asking me whether I'd like to see the world as we know it destroyed in a nuclear holocaust ("No, not really, Harold") or suggesting that one of my daughters go to the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade as "the dangers posed to our society by the military-industrial complex" ("Harold, I don't think we have anybody at home who can sew that well").

But the 400 people who actually went on the first *Nation* cruise—which was also the first cruise I attended as one of the panelists—did not appear to be angry with me at all, except for the woman who upbraided me over my failure to call on her when, as the moderator of a panel, I had asked for questions from the floor. "Why don't you people ever call on anyone in the balcony?"

RYAN INZANA

she demanded, confronting me as I left the stage. “What is your bias against the balcony?” Ever since then, in the spirit of the political discussions common to *Nation* cruises, I’ve thought of the people she represented as the balconistas or “the balconite faction.”

I’ve had a similar paucity of vitriol directed at me on the cruises I’ve gone on since. Although the wily and parsimonious Victor S. Navasky (or “the Old W&P,” as his intimates now call him) has retired as editor of *The Nation*, he continues to preside over the annual cruises. If the cruise-ship passengers he snares are a fair sampling, *Nation* readers are nowhere near as solemn as Harold the Committed.

They laughed when another panelist, the late and sorely missed Molly Ivins, referred casually to the comfortable group gathered before her amidst the faux luxury of the cruise ship’s theater as “the vanguard of the proletariat.” On another occasion, they at least chuckled politely when I said that in speeches around the country, I used to describe the circulation of *The Nation* as “600 librarians and eight unreconstructed old Trotskyites”—although a considerate fellow panelist took me aside afterward to explain that the reason some people in the audience might have seemed puzzled rather than entertained by my remark was that, in the sectarian disputes of the 1930s, *The Nation* and the Trotskyites had, in fact, been bitter enemies. (I was grateful for that information, although I’ve since begun to wonder about the identity of all those codgers who approached me after speeches and explained their loyalty to *The Nation* by saying, in the friendliest sort of way, “I’m one of those eight unreconstructed old Trotskyites you mentioned.”)

The audience did not seem offended when I said, as a way of taking note of the chest congestion I was contending with while trying to moderate a panel: “I want to reassure everyone on one point. When someone gets a respiratory ailment in a closed, air-conditioned environment, the first thing that comes to mind, of course, is Legionnaires’ disease. You should know that I phoned the headquarters of the American Legion, in Indianapolis, this morning, and they informed me that this crowd would not be allowed to have Legionnaires’ disease. Maybe Abraham Lincoln Brigade disease.” That evening, by chance, I sat at dinner with a man who actually had fought in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

He turned out to be someone who had some good stories and some strongly held political views—a description that fits a lot of the people I’ve met on the cruises. Shyness and reticence are not rampant among them. When the moderator of a panel calls for questions from the floor, just about every hand in the room seems to go up—the sheer number of hands being waved was my excuse, feeble as it must have sounded, for not calling on the woman who upbraided me—and often the only interrogatory aspect of the “question” is a tagged-on “Don’t you think?” These days, when I’m serving as moderator, I’m always careful to call first on someone in the balcony. Having learned my lesson, I have no desire to incur the wrath of the balconistas. **150th**

Radical Hope

How to be committed without drinking the Kool-Aid—and other things Andy Kopkind taught me.

MARIA MARGARONIS

The legacy of Andrew Kopkind, the celebrated political journalist and associate editor of The Nation, *continues in these pages to this day. Margaronis was his first intern and wrote this letter to mark the twentieth anniversary of his death.*

Dear Andy,

It’s a strange habit, writing letters to the dead. But I sat down just now to write something else, and I opened a notebook I was keeping in the depths of the Greek crisis (gloom followed by doom, you would say), and on the first page I found these rather earnest questions:

“November 3rd: Leafing through *The Thirty Years’ Wars*, and thinking about political exhaustion and disillusion, and how Andy lived it and recovered from it, and what was lost in the recovery—a kind of engagement? Or just the belief that one could change things rapidly and completely? Energy and hope or an illusion of grandeur?”

So you come back, after twenty years, over and over again. You come back like the Cheshire Cat: a quizzical smile—I know that you know that I know. Your brown bald head bent over the pepper plants: part of the nightshade family. Broad fingers with garden soil worn into the nail beds. Trousers a little too tight from evening out the pie. The *p-p-p-p* of politics, brain faster than your tongue. Arms round the loaded laundry basket. And then the clatter of the keys, sentences cornering tightly, glued to the edge of thought. Sometimes it’s slicker than that: don’t get it right, get it written, go for the gag, you said. But even then it feels true, in the sense of being true to something, to what mattered then.

We burn out, pick up, go on a different way—or not. How do we do that? How do we hold on to the energy and the edge?

You emerge an hour later and head for the stove to check the sweet-and-sour cabbage soup. You want the sharpness of vinegar, the velvety undertones of almost-melted meat.

So, Andy, here we are: I in rainy London, you, ashes under an oak at the top of Kopkind Road, but both of us somehow also in Annie and Victor Navasky’s apartment with a roomful of people who loved you and who love you still. Relativity, you see, and memory, and the persistence of print. So much has happened in twenty years, children and 9/11 and Obama and Occupy and the deaths of friends and gay marriage and Iraq and the Arab Spring and climate change and smartphones and on and on and on…

But if you were really here—a little thinner maybe, eyes still sharply blue, picking at the good pickings still left on the table—the thing I’d want to ask you about (always a little earnestly) is that moment of exhaustion that came for you when the end of the ’60s turned too dark: about fraying and regrouping, about radical hope. The moments and the movements come and go, power shifts a little, rearranges itself to contain them. We burn out, pick up, go on a different way—or not. How do we do that? How do we hold on to the energy and the edge?

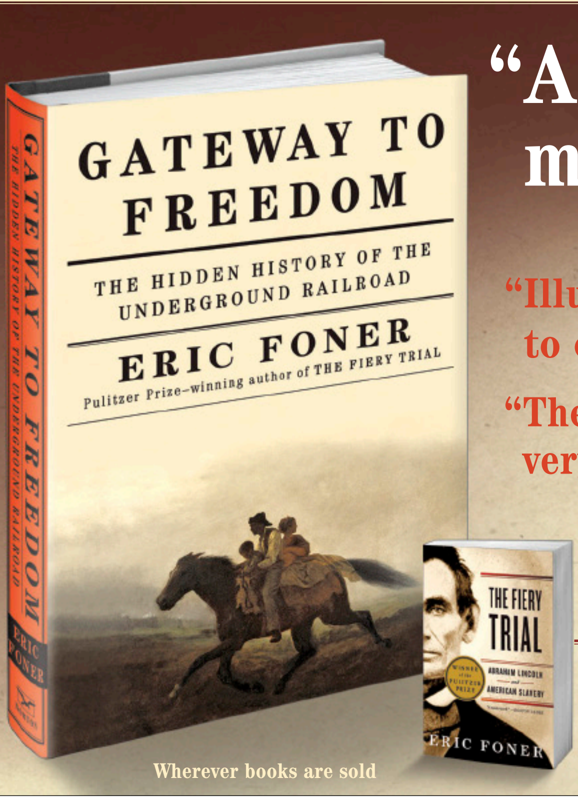
And you would shrug and ladle out another bowl of soup, and after a few spoonfuls you'd begin with a little stammer to tell another story, and the story would somehow shift the question, move it on without actually answering it. And I'm the King of the Cats. Because that's the gift, the secret really: changing the way we see it, moving the story on.

But it isn't only that. Dipping into *The Thirty Years' Wars*, hearing your speaking voice in the prologue, your writing voice in the pieces, all those pieces ("It's what I do," you said, when you were ill and I asked you how you managed to keep on turning them out), there's a quintessential Andyness that doesn't really change from 1965 to 1994, that a lot of us carry with us as a kind of touchstone. It's there in the verbal tics and echoes, which are more than tics and echoes, more than markers of your style—they're part of the way language dissects and connects the world for you, microcosm and macrocosm, the personal and the political, like fractals. "Six months is not a very long time in which to build a Good Society, much less a Great one," you wrote in 1965 in your deadpan dissing of Lyndon Johnson. "B.W. was not, scientifically speaking, a great whale, but she was a very good one," you opined in 1986, when some species-ist Bernie Goetz pumped four bullets from a .22 into a young beluga in New Haven Harbor, who had, as you put it, dropped out of her school. Only connect.

But it isn't just that, either. It's something about knowing how to be both inside and outside, how to be committed without drinking the Kool-Aid, how to take in and think with people's stories and fears and dreams. You showed us how to pay attention in that way, to risk ourselves in the listening and the telling. Schmoozing in your office of a Monday morning between bites of Vidalia onion and tales from the Guilford woods, I learned that a movement or a moment doesn't have to be either hopeful or doomed, a beginning or an end; it can be—it usually is—both, because it changes the people in it. "Whatever the original point of the march," you wrote in 1965, "the most immediate significance is for the marchers themselves. The young Dallas County Negroes who walk singing freedom songs confirm their commitment to the movement as their fathers and older brothers never did. The thousands of whites who have come to Selma from the North will never, of course, be the same."

It took you ten years to write about the moment when you knew that you would never be the same, after the Weather Underground, after the townhouse explosion, the moment when you threw away your suits and ties and bought a leather jacket and a motorbike, turned on, tuned in, came out. You rode to Vermont and made a world, with friends, with neighbors, with John, later with some of us. The garden is smaller now. Storms have felled trees and friends. But your world is still there, amazing in its resilience. The kids have grown up in it, take it entirely for granted, though only one of mine was born in time to meet you. (He isn't spoiled, you used to say. He's getting spoiled!) And John and JoAnn have made the Kopkind Colony (no, don't roll your eyes), so it's still a place for young people to hang out and talk and relax and be inspired, and do all the things young (and old) people like to do.

So, Andy, here's to you, wherever you are, whoever you're hanging out with—Rita Hayworth, Salvador Allende, so many friends and comrades; Peaches too, who'll be enjoying her catnip and her cat torture with you. We hope you're having a wonderful time, though we wish, we wish, we wish you were still here with us. **150th**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THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
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Separated at Birth

The Nation *and* Alice in Wonderland *were born within days of each other. In this seditious reading, they rejoin the dance.*

ARIEL DORFMAN

"Tut, tut, child!" said the Duchess. "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it."

ALICE IN WONDERLAND. DOES *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* HAVE ANYthing to teach readers of *The Nation* today, any lessons for the decades ahead? Any wisdom that might have helped readers of the magazine over the last century and a half in their search for a more just, nonviolent, humane world—if they had only been open to the possibility?

These questions are less bizarre than they might immediately appear. For starters, Lewis Carroll's comic masterpiece and the weekly where this essay is being published had almost simultaneous beginnings. Only two scant days separate July 4, 1865, when the adventures of Alice first saw light in London, from July 6 of that same year, when *The Nation*'s inaugural issue came out in New York. And just seventeen months later, in December of 1866, this magazine favorably reviewed the American edition of *Alice in Wonderland*, calling it "wonderfully clever," its creatures "wholly nonsensical," a book that "runs over with fun."

Alas, from that moment onward, the paths of these entities nearly twinned at birth quickly diverged. *Alice in Wonderland* went on to become one of the most popular books of all time (second only, it is said, to Shakespeare and the Bible), and Wonderland a place that old and young (and—oh, dear—Disney!) found worthy of incessant visits. *The Nation* was, to put it mildly, far less popular. Without belittling the myriad successes and triumphs of *The Nation* and the vast, radiant, contradictory left-wing and liberal movement it represented during these last 150 years, it is undeniable that history has not been kind to many of our causes and dreams. Though I wouldn't go so far as to bemoan, as the little girl in the book does, that "things are worse than ever…for I never was so small as this before, never!," we certainly are distant from the utopias we wanted to turn into glorious reality, far from the lands we wondered about and keep longing for.

Without belittling the myriad successes and triumphs of *The Nation*, it is undeniable that history has not been kind to many of our causes and dreams.

What messages, then, might be hidden like gems inside *Alice in Wonderland*—tidbits and intuitions that would have abetted radicals and revolutionaries in their quest for justice, peace and freedom; pitfalls and mistakes and perhaps Mad Tea-Parties that might have been avoided; advice for the future?

TESTIMONIALS

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

1925

It is certainly curious that so outspoken a journal as *The Nation* should have survived for sixty years in a country where Truth is tarred and feathered, lynched, imprisoned, clubbed, and expatriated as undesirable three times a week or so.

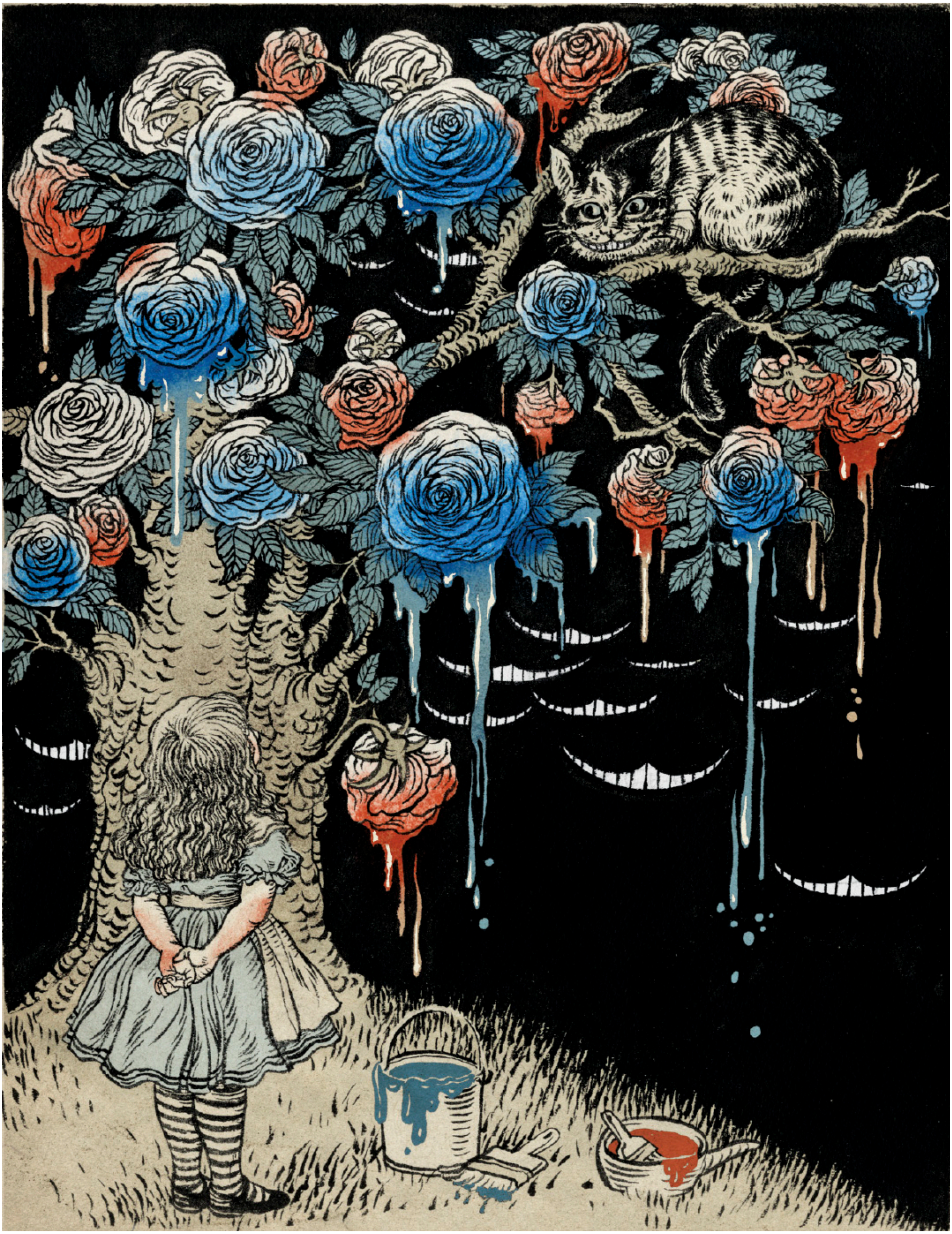
"The game was in such confusion that she never knew whether it was her turn or not."

I HAD READ LEWIS CARROLL'S BOOK MANY TIMES—first as a child and then to my own children, and recently with my wife, Angélica, simply to relish its chaotic wit—but to once again plunge down the rabbit hole, employing as a lens the perspective of 150 years of struggle for a better world, was surprisingly revelatory and frequently disturbing, with many phrases and situations resonating with my own experience of progressive activism and engagement over the course of more than fifty years.

Had I not spent, along with so many of my luminous comrades, too many hours "busily painting [white roses] red"? Have we not habitually exclaimed to those who would like to sit at our table, "No room! No room!"—when there was, in fact, "plenty of room"? And doesn't this sound sadly familiar: "The players all played at once without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while, and fighting." Reminiscing about countless meetings with militants from an array of left-wing organizations and factions that were, like the mouse, "so easily offended," having ardently bickered over tiny, rarefied details and abstruse, murky theories, I can't resist Alice's observation that "the Hatter's remark seemed…to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English." And I found it all too easy to identify with Alice as she muses: "It's really dreadful…the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!"

To those who nod their heads in appreciation, remembering their own misadventures in Jargonland, Lewis Carroll won't let us off the hook so easily. When Alice, polite and invariably reasonable, presumes—as we would—to be above the surrounding bedlam, the Cheshire Cat has no trouble in proving that she is just as insane as everyone else: "You must be," the Cat states irrefutably, "or you wouldn't have come here."

At times, that general madness takes the form of harmless nonsense, but it is also often embodied insistently, nightmarishly, in Wonderland violence. "Sentence first—verdict afterwards," the Queen of Hearts commands, as if she were Stalin or Mao. Beatings, mock trials, threats of imminent execution, inhumane treatment of underlings and, above all, the incessant chopping off of people's heads at the slightest mistake: "They're dreadfully fond of beheading people here: the great wonder is, that there's any one left alive!" As if Lewis Carroll were unwittingly warning us of the looming dangers of dictatorship, whether perpetrated by twentieth-century revolutionaries assaulting heaven in the name of the people, or regimes trying to salvage capitalism and privilege against the assault by those neglected, beleaguered people themselves. The crazed rush toward the future justified by the fierce urgency of now, the certainty that "there was not a moment to be lost": we repeatedly find ourselves impulsively going down the nearest rabbit hole, "never



YUKO SHIMIZU

once considering how in the world…to get out again."

"Would you tell me, please, which way
I ought to walk from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you
want to get to," said the Cat.

So, where do I hope to get to myself with this somber meditation on Alice and her potential adventures in Leftland? Is it fair to turn a book so rowdy and lighthearted into an ominous critique of radical projects and methods? In despondently imitating the gloomy March Hare by selecting only lamentations as my bread and butter, am I not ignoring what is essential, enduring, lovable, emancipating about Lewis Carroll's story and characters?

Because *Alice in Wonderland* can also be read as a seditious text, overflowing with utopian impulses. Why not emphasize Alice's realization "that very few things indeed were really impossible"—a credo that has fueled the fire of so many social crusades, that the gay-rights movement and the ecological wave of initiatives and protests have recently revealed to be true? Why not blaze in bold letters the words of the Duchess: "The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours"—a dictum that skewers corporations and greedy executives who collect millionaire bonuses while rejecting a raise in the minimum wage? The book celebrates rebellion and disobedience (the Cook throws frying pans at the Duchess, the Duchess boxes the Queen's ears, the Knave steals tarts, Alice refuses to cooperate, the guinea pigs cheer despite being suppressed), while despotic figures are derided as bumbling and ineffective.

What we should rescue, above all, from *Alice in Wonderland* is its subversive, rambunctious humor—the same wildness, the same core questioning of authority that has inspired the insurrection and resistance and dissidence of millions over the last century and a half, the imagining of a possible parallel reality that does not obey the rules of a society in dire need of change. It is this carnivalesque energy and playfulness that we should recognize and embrace as ours, a crucial part of our progressive identity.

The tendency, of course, is toward the opposite language and style and demeanor on the left: a heavy, ponderous solemnity, as if all the tragedies of history were weighing us down. We take ourselves, and our discourse, seriously, and for good reason. The suffering is immense, the injustice intolerable, the stupidity widespread, the depredations of the industrial-military-surveillance complex expanding, the future dark and dystopian, the planet on the verge of apocalypse.

All the more reason, then, to exult in our own liberation when we have the chance, to revel in the thrill of breaking conventions and interrogating our own beliefs, certitudes and dogmas. All the more reason to recognize the re-enchantment that is reborn with each small act of hope and solidarity, and to extol the sheer joy that accompanies the certainty that we need not leave the world as we found it.

TESTIMONIALS

DEEPAK BHARGAVA

Executive Director,
Center for Community Change

The Nation **is the indispensable vehicle for news, reflection, debate and strategic thinking for progressives in the twenty-first century, constantly renewing a tradition it has exemplified for 150 years.** ***The Nation*****'s reporting has helped define the terrain for activism—not only by diagnosing and explaining what we're up against, but also by providing a vital forum to debate what we stand for.** ***The Nation*****'s engaged and passionate coverage of social movements has helped progressives see ourselves as connected across issues and geography.** ***The Nation*****'s respect for our differences, and its commitment to honest dialogue and the presentation of different views, has made our strategies better and our movements stronger. Above all,** ***The Nation*** **has been a beacon of hope, inspiration and ideas—one that has nourished our minds and spirits through the dark periods of our history, and positioned us to seize the moment as the country once again opens to progressive possibilities.**

"It must be a very pretty
dance," said Alice timidly.
"Would you like to see a little of
it?" said the Mock Turtle.
"Very much indeed," said Alice.

During the Chilean revolution (1970–73), the people of my country marched endlessly, attending interminable rallies in defense of the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. The energy of those brothers and sisters by my side, their resilience and fortitude and inventiveness, their irrepressible jokes and homemade placards, have inspired me ever since. What has also stayed with me is how much more vibrant and creative those men and women in the streets of our city were than most of the men (they were predominantly male) who droned away for hours on the podium, exhorting, analyzing, swearing that the masses could not be stopped. I wondered then—as I do now, so many decades later—why the enthusiasm and defiance of those democratic multitudes were not unleashed, why there was such a contrast between the leaders and the people. And it pains me that our peaceful revolution culminated in a disaster: Allende dead, so many tortured, persecuted, exiled, so many dreams that ended, seemed to end.

The King in *Alice in Wonderland* has some grave and presumably commonsensical advice for the White Rabbit about how to tell a story: "Begin at the beginning… and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

He is mistaken.

Those of us who thirst for a different world, who seek alternative horizons, know that you do not stop when the end has been reached, that there is no end to our need for justice, that rebels never go "out altogether, like a candle." Rather, we are like the Cheshire Cat. Even when our body has vanished, a grin will always remain obdurately behind, a ghostly presence, to prove that we were once here and may re-emerge, that we can't go on but, as Lewis Carroll's heir, Samuel Beckett, understood, we must go on.

Ultimately, as *The Nation* faces the future, this is what we should learn and cherish from *Alice in Wonderland* for the next 150 years of illumination and struggle, the challenge that this fantastically absurd text provides us.

After so many tribulations and trials, are we brave enough to respond, again and again, to the Mock Turtle's invitation: "Will you join the dance?"

After so many tribulations and trials—those we have been through and those that await us anew—are we brave enough to respond, again and again, to the Mock Turtle's invitation: "Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?"

I believe he is not wrong, that Mock Turtle, when he sings, when he promises as he dances that "there is another shore, you know, upon the other side." **150th**

***The Nation*, circa 1946**
From left to right:
Keith Hutchison, J. King Gordon, Joseph Wood Krutch, Freda Kirchwey, Maxwell Stewart, I.F. Stone

Who We Are, Then and Now

From 1865 to 2015, a small but passionate staff has edited *The Nation*, including Wendell Phillips Garrison (literary editor from 1865 to 1906), Alaska governor and senator Ernest Gruening (managing editor from 1920 to 1923), poet Mark Van Doren (who succeeded his older brother Carl as literary editor), Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas (associate editor), Randall Jarrell (literary editor after World War II) and, very briefly, the novelist William Dean Howells. Pictured here is the editorial staff of Freda Kirchwey's *Nation*, circa 1946, and the current editorial staff with editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel.

***The Nation*, 2015**
From left to right, top row: John Palattella, Lizzy Ratner, Richard Kim, Francis Reynolds, Miriam Markowitz; bottom row: Kate Murphy, Sarah Leonard, Kai Wright, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Roane Carey, Emily Douglas

THE NATION: A BIOGRAPHY

1915-1965

From World War I to Vietnam, from the red scare to McCarthyism, The Nation *stood firm for civil liberties and civil rights, even when that meant being banned—or standing alone.*

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

THE FIRST ITEM IN *THE NATION* on September 21, 1918, was an apology: "We deeply regret that last week's issue of *The Nation* is detained by the Post Office." The problem was an article attacking the Wilson administration for sending Samuel Gompers to a conference of Labor and Socialist parties meeting in England. Previously, the magazine had opposed the labor leader's campaign for an eight-hour workday from the right, criticizing his "forbidding" manner and describing him as having a "big head, heavy foreign features, and burly frame." But now that Villard was turning *The Nation* to the left, Gompers was too tepid, too hostile to socialism, and too bound to Woodrow Wilson to be a satisfactory voice for America's workers.

Villard, who maintained a pretense of outraged innocence, was secretly delighted by the government's response. Suddenly everyone was talking about this subversive sheet. In a letter to the Post Office solicitor responsible for the seizure, Villard thanked him for a "splendid advertisement" he reckoned was worth at least $100,000 in free publicity. *The Nation*'s circulation skyrocketed during the next two years.

Another publicity coup was *The Nation*'s campaign against the boundaries of traditional gender roles, especially the series "These Modern Women"—anonymous essays written by "women active in professional and public life," showcasing changing attitudes about "men, marriage, children, and jobs." *The Nation* also pushed against its own editor's comfort zone. When literary editor Mark Van Doren printed a poem by Babette Deutsch that contained the line "as dozing bitches break their dream to bark," Villard objected to "this new poetical license," adding that he found some of the magazine's poetry "execrable."

Though Frank Cobb of *The World* was not alone in labeling *The Nation* "distinctly Bolshevistic," in reality the position of the magazine (and its editor) with regard to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was far more ambivalent. As early as 1920, *The Nation* featured Bertrand Russell's growing disquiet: "I went to Russia believing myself a communist; but contact with those who have no doubts has intensified a thousandfold my own doubts, not only of communism, but of every creed so firmly held that for its sake men are willing to inflict widespread misery." While Villard himself called for diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government, and often expressed admiration for the energy of the Russian people and the vitality of the Soviet economy, he also made it clear that for liberals, a government that resorted to "the methods of a Caesar, a Cromwell…a Nicholas, and a Mussolini" could never be acceptable. Spending a month in the country did nothing to soften Villard's views: "I can see no compromise on this question, no argument which shatters the intensity of my belief that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword." At the same time, Villard allowed Louis Fischer, one of Stalin's most energetic apologists, to remain as *The Nation*'s Moscow correspondent.

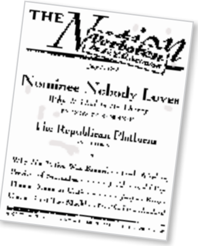
But then Villard's *Nation*, unlike Godkin's, was a venue for open, spirited debate between radicals and liberals on a whole range of issues. Where there was controversy, Villard let it run. Where there was unanimity—as, for example, the shared revulsion at the execution of the Italian-American anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti—*The Nation* spoke with great power.

Where there was controversy, Villard let it run; where there was unanimity, *The Nation* spoke with great power.

IT WASN'T JUST THE SIMPLE FACT OF HER SEX THAT set Freda Kirchwey, Villard's successor, apart from her male peers. In 1919, when she took over *The Nation*'s new International Relations Section—an aggregation of clippings and documents from the foreign press—she was nearly nine months pregnant with her second child (her first had died in infancy). After giving birth, she was back at work within a month, and for the next nine months, every day at noon, she walked from the *Nation* office across the Brooklyn Bridge to her apartment on Montague Street to nurse her son. In 1922, pregnant again, she was made managing editor, partly at the urging of associate editor Norman Thomas. Writing to Villard on magazine business within thirty-six hours of the delivery, she promised: "I'm not going to let it hurt *The Nation*."

From the very beginnings of the New Deal, *The Nation* positioned itself firmly on the president's left. Instead of hailing the Social Security Act of 1935 as the landmark it now seems, *The Nation* highlighted the compromises that had occurred between the bold original proposal and the final legislation. As FDR prepared to run for re-election, *The Nation*, in what would become a long tradition of curbing its enthusiasm even for the most politically sympathetic elected officials, summed up his first term as "Roosevelt's Hollow Triumph." In love with planning, like much of the American left at the time, *The Nation* did salute the Tennessee Valley Authority and the president's experiments in public power, which it labeled the "best of New Deal measures."

On December 7, 1941, I.F. Stone, whom Kirchwey had just hired as *The Nation*'s Washington editor, was on his way to his office at the National Press Building when he was stopped by the elevator man. For Stone, as for Kirchwey, the news that America was at war brought "relief that a long-expected storm had finally broken.... This is really world war," Stone told *Nation* readers, "and in my humble opinion it was unavoidable and is better fought now when we still have allies left." Pearl Harbor, and American entry in the war against fascism, put the seal on something *The Nation* hadn't had in a long time: respectability.



THE Nation

Nominee Nobody Loves

"It is impossible," McWilliams wrote, to own *The Nation*. "It is an idea, a spirit, a name without an address; it is fragile, without physical assets, but it is free and so it lives."

THE BIRTH OF THE JEWISH STATE WAS ONE OF the few bright spots on the magazine's post-war horizon. Kirchwey made her own trip to Palestine in May 1946; on a visit to a kibbutz founded by Americans in the north of the country, she was particularly gratified to discover "40 *Nation* readers!" Returning to America, Kirchwey threw herself—and *The Nation*—into the fight for a Jewish state, writing fierce editorials condemning any evidence of wavering by the Truman administration, making speeches for the Jewish National Fund, and publicizing a series of reports by the *Nation* Associates documenting the wartime collaboration between the Nazis and the mufti of Jerusalem. She also lobbied Eleanor Roosevelt, Felix Frankfurter and Bernard Baruch on behalf of the Jewish state.

Israeli independence in May 1948 was a rare victory for a magazine that had become increasingly embattled. The following month saw *The Nation* banned from New York City public schools following a series by Paul Blanshard critical of the Catholic Church. Though Eleanor Roosevelt, historian Henry Steele Commager, Max Lerner, Reinhold Niebuhr and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise all signed a statement opposing the ban, which *The Nation* also challenged in court, it would not be lifted until January 1963. A librarian in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, lost her job in 1950 for giving shelf space to *The Nation*.

By then, Joseph McCarthy was in full cry in the Senate and on television; among the intelligentsia, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. piled on, accusing *The Nation* of "betraying its finest traditions" by printing, "week after week, *these wretched apologies for Soviet despotism*." The accusation—as Schlesinger, a frequent *Nation* contributor, must have known—was both untrue and unfair. Yet nothing turned the tide of fear and denunciation.

As Carey McWilliams, then a *Nation* contributing editor, soon retorted, "This was the language of McCarthyism even if spoken with a Harvard accent." Who better to edit a *Nation* special issue on civil liberties? With a cover donated by artist Ben Shahn, "How Free Is Free?" was a gesture against the times, proof that, however diminished its voice, *The Nation* lived to fight on.

IN RETROSPECT, 1955 MARKS A TURNING POINT IN the life of *The Nation*—and not just because the Colorado-born McWilliams was the first editor of the magazine to come, as he put it, from "west of the Bronx." His politics were every bit as radical as Kirchwey's; on some issues, more radical. But his priorities were different. Where her gaze was usually eastward, across the Atlantic to Europe, or Israel, he looked west—not just back to the house he and his wife Iris still owned in Los Angeles, but to the whole country in the middle.

Starting in 1961 and for the next five years, Martin Luther King Jr. contributed a yearly report on the state of the civil-rights movement. "He was very glad to do them, and we let him reprint them. They used them on money-raising campaigns; they were very useful," McWilliams said. In February 1967—a month before leading his first march against the Vietnam War, and two months before his celebrated speech at Riverside Church in New York—King delivered his first unequivocal public condemnation of the war at a *Nation* conference in Los Angeles on reordering national priorities.

Opposition to the war in Vietnam dominated McWilliams's final decade as editor. Throughout the turmoil of the late 1960s and into the Nixon era, *The Nation*'s role was never less than honorable. But as a new generation began to cast off the shibboleths of the Cold War, they turned increasingly to publications other than *The Nation* for guidance. In time, *The Nation* would welcome women's liberation and gay liberation, and rediscover its role as an outspoken critic of American militarism at home and abroad. In the 1950s—in Latin America and Southeast Asia, in Detroit, Los Angeles and Mississippi—America had sown the wind; in the 1960s, it reaped the whirlwind. Once again, the magazine had been fortunate to find the right editor for the times. If McWilliams's very unflappability rendered him increasingly out of temper with the frenzy of the 1970s, it is also true that no other editor has better expressed what the magazine means. "It is impossible," he wrote, to own *The Nation*, "or possess it or bequeath it or sell it or mortgage it. If it ever ceased to be what it has always been, it would simply not exist—regardless of who 'owned' it.... It is an idea, a spirit, a name without an address; it is fragile, without physical assets, but it is free and so it lives." Thanks in large measure to Carey McWilliams, it still is, and still does. **150th**

The Nation

Should the Democratic Party Die?

[November 24, 1920]

3-15-1917
Nicholas II, czar of Russia, abdicates in a revolution *The Nation* calls "long overdue."

11-11-1918
The Great War ends. *The Nation* hopes "the spirit of revolution abroad will not die until all the makers of secret treaties are cast out, and with them, as among the worst enemies of mankind, the armament-manufacturers."

7-19-1919
***The Nation* calls for the abolition of speed limits** for automobiles in an editorial.

4-10-1925
F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is published. Writing in *The Nation*, Carl Van Vechten hails it as "a fine yarn, exhilaratingly spun."

The Faith of a Heretic

ROGER NASH BALDWIN

NOVEMBER 9, 1918

I am before you as a deliberate violator of the Draft Act. I am opposed to this and all other wars. I do not believe in the use of physical force as a method of achieving any end, however good. I am fully aware that my position is extreme, that it is shared by comparatively few, and that in the present temper it is regarded either as unwarranted egotism or as feeble-mindedness. I cannot, therefore, let this occasion pass without attempting to explain the foundations on which so extreme a view rests.

I have had an essentially American upbringing and background. Born in a suburb of Boston, of the stock of the first settlers, I was reared in the public schools and at Harvard College. Early my mind was caught by the age-old struggle for freedom; America meant to me a vital new experiment in free political institutions; personal freedom to choose one's way of life and service seemed the essence of the liberties brought by those who fled the medieval and modern tyrannies of the old world. But I rebelled at our whole autocratic industrial system—with its wreckage of poverty, disease, and crime, and childhood robbed of its right to free growth.

Personally I share the extreme radical philosophy of the future society. I look forward to a social order without any external restraints upon the individual, save through public opinion and the opinion of friends and neighbors. I believe that all parts of the radical movement serve the common end—freedom of the individual from arbitrary external controls.

Even if I were not a believer in radical theories and movements, I would justify the work I have done on the ground of American ideals and traditions alone—as do many of those who have been associated with me. They have stood for those enduring principles which the revolutionary demands of war have temporarily set aside. We have stood against hysteria, mob-violence, unwarranted prosecution, the sinister use of patriotism to cover attacks on radical and labor movements, and for the unabridged right of a fair trial.

Now comes the Government to take me from that service and to demand of me a service I cannot in conscience undertake. I seek no martyrdom, no publicity. Though at the moment I am of a tiny minority, I feel myself part of a great revolt surging up from among the people—the struggle of the masses against the rule of the world by the few—profoundly intensified by the war. It is a struggle against the political State itself, against exploitation, militarism, imperialism, authority in all forms. It is a struggle to break in full force only after the war.

I ask the Court for no favor. I have no bitterness or hate in my heart for any man. Whatever the penalty, I shall endure it, firm in the faith that whatever befalls me, the principles in which I believe will bring forth out of this misery and chaos a world of brotherhood, harmony, and freedom for each to live the truth as he sees it.

Sowing the Wind to Reap the Whirlwind

EDITORIAL

JANUARY 17, 1920

The unprecedented outburst of terror and terrorism which at the moment is venting itself upon Socialists, Communists, "Reds," and agitators of all sorts in this country grows in volume and intensity from day to day. Every morning now brings news of more raids, more scores or hundreds of men and women arrested, more tons of papers seized, more offices and assembly rooms wrecked, more plans for deportation. Ellis Island is crowded to repletion with the victims of the dragnet. Public meetings are broken up or prevented from being held. Every radical thinker or reformer in the United States today who belongs to any organization which the Department of Justice has put under the ban, or who expresses sympathy with the men and women who have been pounced upon, puts his personal liberty in danger if his sympathies be known.

It is well, in times of general unreason and hysteria, to fix the mind on simple, fundamental things. If any of the persons, whether aliens or not, upon whom the Department of Justice has descended have violated the law, they should be indicted, tried, and punished for their offense. The Constitution of the United States defines the crime of treason and the conditions under which alone a charge of treason can be sustained; sedition and conspiracy are offenses known to the law, and punishable by penalties which the law defines with precision.

Unfortunately for our good name as a nation, however, such commonplaces do not by any means cover the case. Far the larger number of the persons who have been arrested and confined, and over whose heads, if they be aliens, hangs the prospect of deportation to Russia or elsewhere, appear to have been seized merely upon suspicion. Membership in the Socialist or Communist parties is not a crime even for an alien. Few of the persons arrested appear to have been given a preliminary hearing in court, or allowed to furnish reason-

PHOTO: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

able bail, or assured of an opportunity to meet their accusers and offer a defense. It would even appear that in numerous cases the persons arrested have been denied the privilege of communicating with their friends or their families.

Wholesale arrests and deportations such as we are now witnessing will not breed respect for government or crush out socialism or communism. The belief that there is in this country one law for the rich and powerful and another for the poor and weak, will be strengthened; as will the conviction that free speech, free debate, and free publication of opinion, are rights to be enjoyed by such only as say what the Department of Justice and powerful business interests approve. We shall not safeguard liberty by repressing it; we shall not raise American prestige abroad by sending overseas the disillusioned and the unassimilated. The only way to end dangerous discontent in the United States is to remove its causes. Unless that is done, those who today are sowing the wind will before long reap the whirlwind.

Can Men and Women Be Friends?

FLOYD DELL

MAY 28, 1924

Friendship between men and women is rather a new thing in the history of the world. Friendship depends upon equality and choice, and there has been very little of either in the relations of the sexes, up to the present. A woman does not choose her male relatives, nor is she according to archaic family laws their equal; motives other than personal choice might lead her to become a man's wife; wholly impersonal reasons might place her in the relationship of kept mistress. Only in her role of paramour was there any implication of free choice; and even here there was no full equality, not even of danger. None of these customary relationships of the past can be said to have fostered friendship between men and women. Doubtless it did exist, but under difficulties.

Family bonds, however, are being more and more relaxed, women are no longer the wards of their male relatives, and friendship with a father or brother is more than ever possible. The free personal choice which marked only the romantic amours of the age of chivalry is now regarded in America as essential to any decent marriage, while the possibility of divorce tends to make free choice something besides a mere youthful illusion. More than ever before, husbands and wives are friends.

[Yet even] today extra-marital friendship exists in an atmosphere of social suspicion. If dancing were not a general custom, if it were the enlightened practice of an advanced few, how peculiar would seem the desire of Mr. X and Mrs. Y to embrace each other to music; and how scandalized the neighbors would be to hear that they *did*! No one would rest until the pair had been driven into an elopement.

We build huge palaces for the kind of happy communion which dancing furnishes; we tend more and more to behave like civilized beings about the impulses which are thus given scope. We are less socially hospitable to the impulses of friendship between men and women.

In friendship there are many moods; but the universal rite of friendship is *talk*. Talk needs no palaces for its encouragement; it is not an expensive affair; it would seem to be well within the reach of all. Yet it isn't. For the talk of friendship requires privacy—though the privacy of a table for two in a crowded and noisy restaurant will suffice—and it requires time. It is a flower slow in unfolding; and it seems to come to its most perfect bloom only after midnight. But, unfortunately, not every restaurant keeps open all night. It is satisfied with two comfortable chairs; a table to lean elbows on is good, too; in winter an open fire, where friendly eyes may stare dreamily into the glowing coals—that is very good; hot or cold drinks according to the season, and a cigarette—these are almost the height of friendship's luxury. These seem not too much to ask. Yet the desire for privacy and uncounted hours of time together is, when considered from that point of view, scandalous in its implications; quite as much so as the desire of Mr. X and Mrs. Y to embrace each other to music. However, Mr. X and Mrs. Y do, under the aegis of a convention, indulge their desire and embrace each other to their heart's content with the full approval of civilized society; and it seems as though another convention might grow up, under the protection of which Mr. X and Mrs. Y might sit up and talk all night without its seeming queer of them.

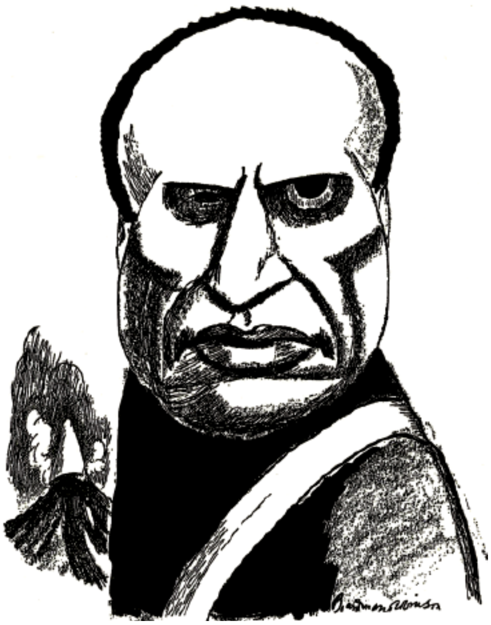
Queer, at the least, it does seem nowadays, except under the conventions of courtship; friends who happen to be married to each other can of course talk comfortably in bed. These bare facts are sufficient to explain why so many men and women who really want to be friends and sit up all night occasionally and talk find it easy to believe that they are in love with each other. They find it all the easier to believe this, because friendship between the sexes is usually spiced with some degree of sexual attraction. But a degree of sexual attraction which might have kept a friendship forever sweet may prove unequal to the requirements of a more serious and intimate relationship. Disillusionment is the penalty, at the very least. Society could well afford to grant more freedom to friendship between men and women, and save the expense of a large number of broken hearts.

And this might have an effect unsuspected by those whom such a prospect of liberty would most alarm today. When a moment's rashness does not necessarily imply red ruin, when sex is freed to a degree from the sense of overwhelming social consequences, it may well become a matter of more profound personal consequence; and with nothing to fear except the spoiling of their friendship, men and women in

ART ARCHIVE

Fascismo Rises

Boardman Robinson, September 19, 1923



an ardent friendship may yet prefer talk to kisses.

"But what if they don't?" A complete answer to that question, from the Utopian point of view, would take us far afield from the subject of friendship; yet some further answer may seem to be required. Such friendships, let us agree, tend to merge insensibly into romantic sexual love: but perhaps in a future where extra-marital romance is made room for with a tender and humorous courtesy, it may actually learn to smile at its illusions—illusions which will still give the zest of ultimate danger to relationships of merely happy and light-hearted play. Thus life will continue to be interesting.

As for the talk of friendship, my Utopian speculations uncover for me no respect in which the thing itself can be improved upon. At its best it has, despite its personal aspect, an impersonal beauty; it is a poignant fulfillment of those profound impulses which we call curiosity and candor; it serves human needs as deep as those which poetry and music serve, and is an art like them. The art exists, and it remains only for the future to give it an adequate hospitality.

> *"It is a peace of vengeance, not of justice. With Germany crushed and autocracy enthroned, with the strong hand of power at the throat of liberty, the battle opens which is to make men free."*
>
> –William MacDonald, "The Madness at Versailles," May 7, 1919

ENCOUNTER

Friendship in the Digital Age

MICHELLE GOLDBERG

The feminism of Floyd Dell, the early-twentieth-century radical novelist, social critic, editor of *The Masses* and frequent contributor to *The Nation*, is striking for its lusty enthusiasm. Reading him, one never gets the sense that he was congratulating himself for his broad-mindedness or making unctuous, covertly condescending arguments about women's higher nature. He was genuinely convinced that feminism was a great boon for men, liberating them from the burdens of sole breadwinning and turning their wives into real friends and comrades.

"Men are tired of subservient women; or, to speak more exactly, of the seemingly subservient woman who effects her will by stealth—the pretty slave with all the slave's subtlety and cleverness," Dell wrote in his 1913 book *Women as World Builders: Studies in Modern Feminism*, a collection of biographical essays about pioneering figures like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Emma Goldman and Ellen Key. "So long as it was possible for men to imagine themselves masters, they were satisfied. But when they found out that they were dupes, they wanted a change. If only for self-protection, they desired to find in woman a comrade and an equal. In reality they desired it because it promised to be more fun."

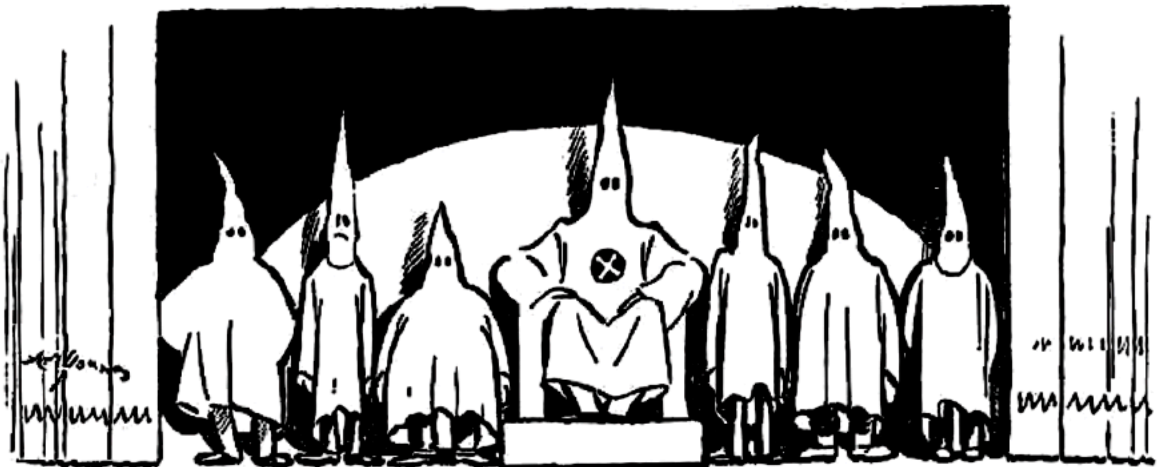
This admirable conviction could, at times, slide into its own kind of chauvinism, though given how much ahead of his time he was, it's perhaps forgivable. Dell, who once wrote an essay titled "Feminism for Men," occasionally acted as if feminism were actually *for* men, valuable chiefly for providing them with the company of scintillating, liberated women. In the introduction to *Women as World Builders*, for example, he sought to explain why, as a man, he'd endeavored to write about feminism. Women, he wrote, have always shaped themselves according to male ideals, and in his view feminism was "but another example of that readiness of women to adapt themselves to a masculine demand"—in this case, the demand for women who would be partners rather than dependents. Since male desire informed the movement, he wrote, men had every right to sit in judgment of it, as it was their "demands it must ultimately fulfill."

Again and again, when Dell wrote about women, there was a tension between his sincere espousal of equality and a view of the world that continued to put men and their needs firmly at the center. This tension runs through Dell's 1924 essay for *The Nation*, "Can Men and Women Be Friends?" The full question, of course, is whether men and women can be friends without sex getting in the way. Dell, a decade

ART ARCHIVE

The Flower of Reaction

Art Young, April 15, 1925



older and less callow than when he wrote *Women as World Builders*, doesn’t entirely answer it, though he moves through interesting twists and intellectual switchbacks as he tries.

At first, it seems like he’s making a forthright case for extramarital friendships that are intense but unromantic; he calls for a new set of social conventions by which “Mr. X and Mrs. Y might sit up and talk all night without its seeming queer of them.” Such talk, he argues, should not threaten their spouses; rather, it is the absence of conventions allowing it that is the real threat to marriage, since this leads people who might simply want to be friends to believe that they are in love. “It is worth while to wonder if a good deal of ‘romance’ is not, after all, friendship mistaking itself for something else; or rather, finding its only opportunity for expression in that mistake,” he writes.

But then comes the doubling back, as Dell suggests, in the very next paragraph, that he can’t quite imagine a friendship with a woman that is not in some sense erotic: “friendship between the sexes is usually spiced with some degree of sexual attraction.” Shortly after that, he writes that men and women who try to be friends might discover “that friendship and sexual romance may sometimes be difficult to relegate to previously determined boundaries.” And this might, in fact, threaten marriage; if so, Dell says, marriage must yield some of its rights so that friendships can flourish.

At this point, those who are suspicious of free-love ideologies—and the people, usually men, who invoke them to squirm out of domestic responsibilities—might start rolling their eyes. But Dell isn’t making a utopian argument for unfettered sexual license. At least in theory, he espoused the ideal, widespread among today’s elite, of committed, egalitarian marriage. (In his 1930 book *Love in the Machine Age*, which declared the patriarchal family obsolete, he dismissed “sexual ‘freedom’” as “the old patriarchal conventions and compromises and infantilities in a pseudo-modern disguise.”) He’s doing something more subtle, arguing that if flirtatious, erotically charged extramarital friendships were respected, they’d be less likely to ignite into torrid, destructive affairs.

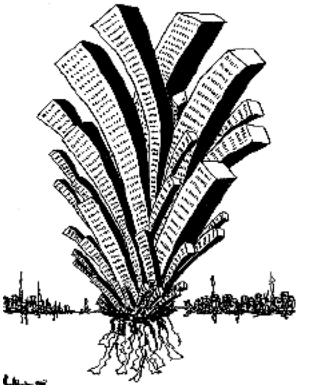
“[P]erhaps in a future where extra-marital romance is made room for with a tender and humorous courtesy,” Dell writes, “it may give up these preposterous and solemn airs, and actually learn to smile at its illusions—illusions which will still give the zest of ultimate danger to relationships of merely happy and light-hearted play.”

What has happened instead, in the ninety years since Dell’s essay, is that feminism has opened up far more space for friendships between men and women than he could have imagined. Today, the idea that all friendships between people of different genders must be at some level sexual seems hopelessly retrograde. But give Dell credit for this: underlying his passionate brief for allowing men and women more opportunities to converse was the assumption that women have something to say, and that men’s lives might be as enriched by listening to women as by sleeping with them. “[W]ith nothing to fear except the spoiling of their friendship,” he wrote, “men and women in an ardent friendship may yet prefer talk to kisses.”

Take Every Empty House!

EDITORIAL (WILLIAM MACDONALD)

August 28, 1920



HENDRIK VAN LOON

The Tenement House Commissioner of New York City, Frank Mann, was quoted two weeks ago as saying that the shortage of apartments in the city aggregated 40,000. Mayor Hylan said that the figure was too low and should be nearer 100,000; while Edward Doyle, secretary of the Mayor’s Housing Conference Committee, put the shortage at 160,000.

Everybody knows why this startling state of things has arisen and why it continues. There was practically no building for residential purposes during the war, and there is very little building now.

Everybody knows not only that there is no building, but why there is no building. High prices of land, labor, and material in the cities have made it impossible to build at a profit unless the owner can be assured of a high rental; and rentals, thanks in part to scarcity, in part to the high cost of building, and in part to profiteering by landlords, have about reached the limit of human endurance.

This is the situation. What does it mean for the people? For one thing, it means that some hundreds of thousands of families are threatened with the loss of the apartments or houses which they now occupy, and with not even a remote prospect of finding any others.

All this spells calamity. A population without homes means not only inconvenience; it means sickness and exposure and suffering for men, women, and children; and it may mean death. Without greater forbearance and self-restraint than a houseless population has ever yet exhibited, it also means riot, disorder, and crime. What is the government doing about it? Nothing as yet that can have any appreciable effect for many months to come.

There is one thing that should be done at once in every large city in which the housing problem is acute. That is to take possession of every unoccupied house, or building, or apartment that is fit or can be made fit for human habitation, and make it available for the people who need homes. There are hundreds of houses in every large city that are unoccupied. Some of them have been unoccupied for years, as their boarded doors and windows testify. Some are the superfluous houses of the superfluous rich; some are the town houses of well-to-do owners who pass all of the year in the country or abroad. There are stores and shops and lofts which are vacant, in which families could be housed. In a crisis such as now confronts us, no man has a moral right to close the doors of a building which he does not use; and if he will not rent at a fair rate, the municipal government should not hesitate to take possession, fix a fair rental, and let the people in. There are, in addition, houses which are unoccupied because they no longer meet the requirements of the tenement house laws. Beyond question, many of these could be made habitable at small expense, and that expense the city should assume for the time being. It will need a robust Mayor and city government thus to take the law into their own hands; but the people would support them. The crisis is too acute and too near to wait for slow and formal processes. The emergency is as great, and calls for as prompt and energetic action, as any that could arise out of a war. Let every empty house be opened for the people who will have no homes.

ENCOUNTER

Every New Yorker Needs a Home

MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO

It was the best of times for New York City's elite. It was the worst of times for New York City's working people.

In a 1920 editorial, *The Nation* urged the government of New York City to take "prompt and energetic action" to assure decent, affordable housing for all. "No man has a moral right to close the doors of a building which he does not use," the editorial said, "and if he will not rent at a fair rate, the municipal government should not hesitate to take possession, fix a fair rental, and let the people in." While those were different times, the fundamental message still rings true today.

Every New Yorker needs a home. And not just a home, but one that is safe and affordable and that leaves a family with enough money for other basic necessities like food, healthcare and transportation.

Our city's government has the responsibility to push for affordable housing for its citizens. And that is what we are doing. Last May, we presented "Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan," which seeks to create or preserve 200,000 affordable-housing units for half a million New Yorkers. (That's enough housing for the entire population of Miami or Atlanta.) This $41 billion effort is the largest housing program undertaken by any city—or state, for that matter—in the nation's history.

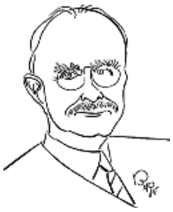
We're converting voluntary affordable-housing programs into hard and fast requirements for developers. We're adding new resources in order to fast-track small neighborhood projects and renovations that will help New Yorkers who are being priced out of their own communities. We're putting our pension funds and our private sector to work investing in the next generation of affordable housing.

Our plan is about the future, but it is inspired by New York City's progressive past as a laboratory for housing innovation. More than a century ago, Jacob Riis published his groundbreaking work of photojournalism, *How the Other Half Lives*, in which he documented the substandard living conditions in the tenements of the Lower East Side.

The Roaring '20s saw a burgeoning disparity in income between the wealthy and everyone else—in our city and across the nation—escalating the need for more affordable housing.

Today, we face inequality every bit as extreme as in that era. While rents are on the rise, working families' wages are at a standstill. Half of all households in our city qualify as "rent-burdened"—spending so much of their income on housing that they are unable to meet other vital expenses. We are grappling with a homelessness crisis unprecedented in our history, and even families that were once solidly middle-class are forced to consider leaving the city they love because they can't afford to stay in their neighborhoods and homes.

Keeping New Yorkers here and making room for those yet to come aren't challenges we can afford to ignore. Our ability to confront them will define what kind of city we will be for decades to come. We must live up to our heritage of making this a city where working people can thrive and find their way up the economic ladder. It's the story of New York. And we intend for it to be our future.



Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of the famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and perhaps the most prominent liberal intellectual of his day, was the editor of *The Nation* from 1918 to 1933.

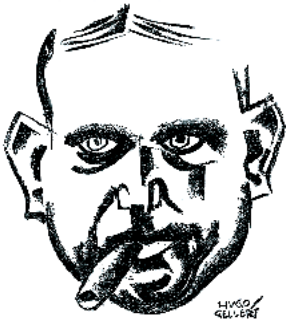
In Tennessee

H.L. MENCKEN

July 1, 1925

What could be of greater utility to the son of a Tennessee mountaineer than an education making him a good Tennesseean, content with his father, at peace with his neighbors, dutiful to the local religion, and docile under the local mores?

That is all the Tennessee anti-evolution law seeks to accomplish. The State, to a degree that should be gratifying, has escaped the national standardization. Its people show a character that is immensely different from the character of, say, New Yorkers or Californians. They retain, among other things, the anthropomorphic religion of an elder day. They do not profess it; they actually believe in it. The Old Testament, to them, is not a mere sacerdotal whizz-bang, to be read for its pornography; it is an authoritative history, and the transactions recorded in it are as true as the story of Washington and the cherry tree, or that of the late Woodrow's struggle to keep us out of the war. So crediting the sacred narrative, they desire that it be taught to their children, and any doctrine that makes game of it is immensely offensive to them. When such a doctrine, despite their protests, is actually taught, they proceed to put it down by force.



Is that procedure singular? I don't think it is. It is adopted everywhere, the instant the prevailing notions, whether real or false, are challenged. Suppose a school teacher in New York began entertaining his pupils with the case against the Jews, or against the Pope. Suppose a teacher in Vermont essayed to argue that the late Confederate States were right, as thousands of perfectly sane and intelligent persons believe—that Lee was a defender of the Constitution and Grant a traitor to it. But I need not pile up suppositions. The evidence of what happens to such a contumacious teacher was spread before us copiously during the late uproar about Bolsheviks. And it was not in rural Tennessee but in the great cultural centers which now laugh at Tennessee that punishments came most swiftly, and were most barbarous. It was not Dayton but New York City that cashiered teachers for protesting against the obvious lies of the State Department.

Yet now we are asked to believe that some mysterious and vastly important principle is at stake at Dayton. Tell it to the marines! No principle is at stake at Dayton save the principle that school teachers, like plumbers, should stick to the job that is set before them, and not go roving about the house, breaking windows, raiding the cellar, and demoralizing the children.

ILLUSTRATIONS: LEFT, HUGO GELLERT; FAR LEFT, OSCAR BERGER

Happy
Birthday

With a Deep Bow
and a Salute

RollingStone®

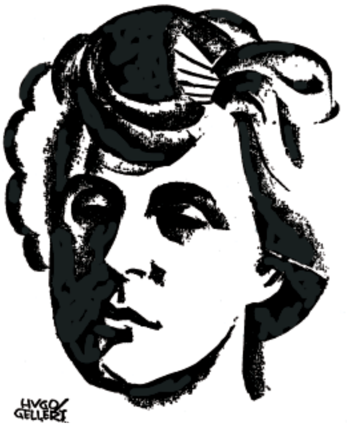
The United States and the Artist

ZONA GALE

JULY 1, 1925

Can an artist exist and function freely in the United States? I think that he can do so if he knows where and how.

Certain hazards among us are to be conceded and survived, and if the artist is a Negro, his difficulties are needlessly greater in this country than in any other land in the civilized world. In general, [though,] the great United States handicap is none of these. It lies deeper and is not to be conquered by praise or fellowship or loaf and flask.



It is the lack in the national life of that indefinable control by the ordered, the accustomed, the mellow, the dreaming, the old. We know that we are without memories or echoes. Time is neither our asset nor our despair, but merely our hope. We are not the old world.

If I were an artist I should, in the light of my experience, stay here and confidently expect to do my work. I should know that from out the decays of Italy and the fatigues of France and the deepening impassivities of Great Britain one could look and imagine no more challenging artistic adventure than waits in this land with the unimaginative name. I should know that if in the ancient days I had gone questing for a field I should very likely have renounced everything in exchange for the terms of our unique life.

Art seeks to interpret the human spirit, naked in the universe, itself without nationality or academy or learned society or pension or past. If, then, an artist looks out upon that spirit hard enough, even in this land so lacking in the scrutiny, the pattern, or the label of the past, albeit not without something of the fragrance of the universal breath, it may be that he will forget the difficulties of keeping his covenant in the United States.

He will be in no illusion. He will know, sadly enough, that he has turned from the flowered debris, the resonant footsteps, the delicate somnolence, the emanations of genius and of ruin. And when our one hundred percenters come and tell him that he has the best country on earth to write in, he will emphatically demur. He will reply that there is no best country to write in. There are only an old world and a new. You make your choice.

ART ARCHIVE

Striking Miners

William Gropper, August 23, 1933

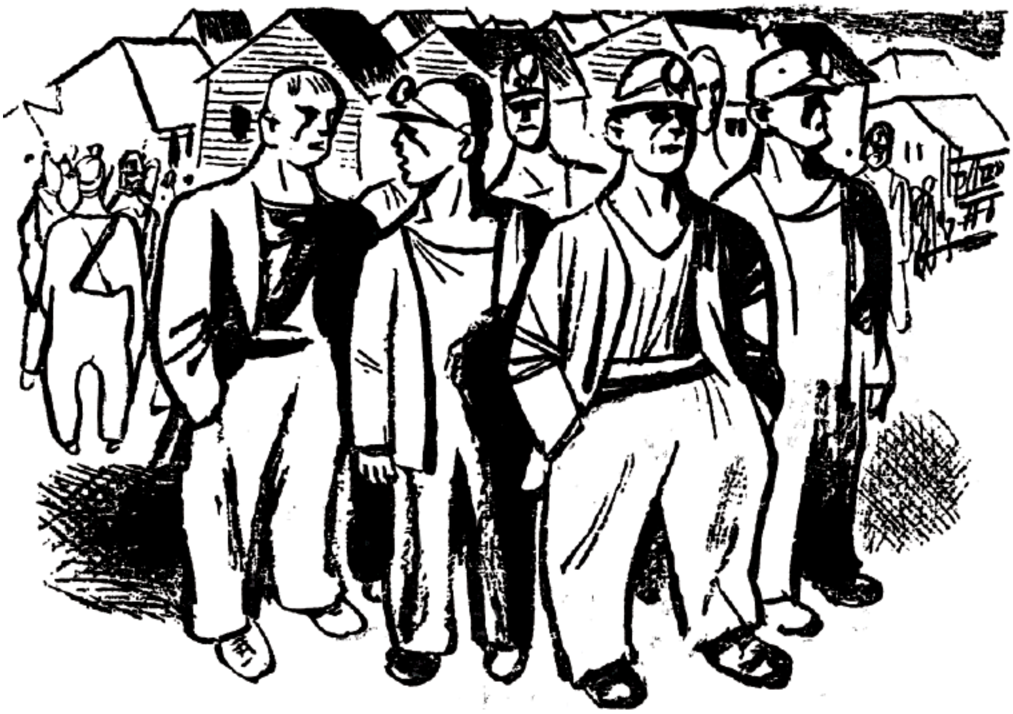


ILLUSTRATION: TOP, HUGO GELLERT

The Nation
FOUNDED 1865
60th
anniversary
ARTICLES AND LETTERS

[July 1, 1925]

10-29-1929
The stock market crashes. *The Nation*, like many other observers, doesn't quite foresee the gravity of the impending economic disaster, ruing only that "this so-called 'healthy reaction'" could be "a costly process for the thousands, wise or unwise, who have had their accounts wiped out."

3-4-1933
Franklin Delano Roosevelt takes the presidential oath. Two weeks later, *The Nation* observes that he "has so far swept everything before him with the strength and velocity of a March wind."

The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain

LANGSTON HUGHES

June 23, 1926

One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet," meaning, I believe, "I want to write like a white poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white." And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself. And I doubted then that, with his desire to run away spiritually from his race, this boy would ever be a great poet. But this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America—this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible. A very high mountain indeed for the would-be racial artist to climb in order to discover himself and his people.

Certainly there is, for the American Negro artist who can escape the restrictions the more advanced among his own group would put upon him, a great field of unused material ready for his art. Without going outside his race, and even among the better classes with their "white" culture and conscious American manners, but still Negro enough to be different, there is sufficient matter to furnish a black artist with a lifetime of creative work. And when he chooses to touch on the relations between Negroes and whites in this country with their innumerable overtones and undertones, surely, and especially for literature and the drama, there is an inexhaustible supply of themes at hand. To these the Negro artist can give his racial individuality, his heritage of rhythm and warmth, and his incongruous humor that so often, as in the Blues, becomes ironic laughter mixed with tears.

Jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul—the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile. To my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist, if he accepts any duties at all from outsiders, to change through the force of his art that old whispering "I want to be white," hidden in the aspirations of his people, to "Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro—and beautiful!"

So I am ashamed for the black poet who says, "I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet," as though his own racial world were not as interesting as any other world. I am ashamed, too, for the colored artist who runs from the painting of Negro faces to the painting of sunsets after the manner of the academicians because he fears the strange un-whiteness of his own features. An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid to do what he might choose.

Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

ENCOUNTER

The Mountain Has Changed

TOURÉ

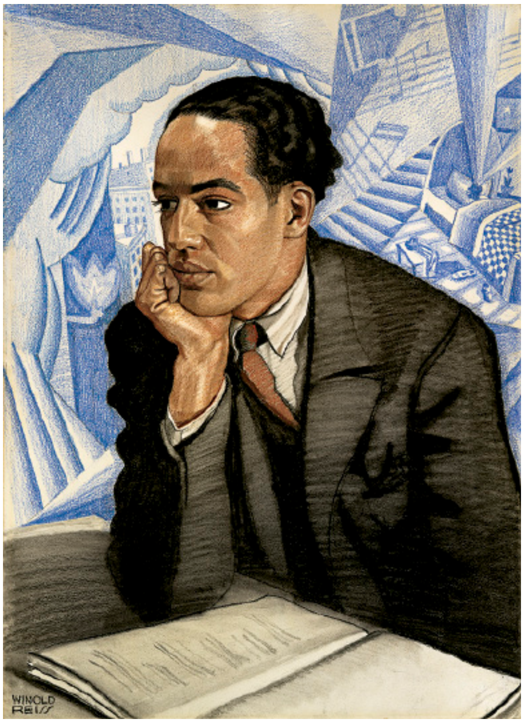
Brother Langston nailed it when he said that Black culture provides "sufficient matter to furnish a black artist with a lifetime of creative work." I was shaped as a writer by things I experienced when I was 6 years old. I remember walking through Boston—to be precise, Mattapan and Roxbury—with my hand engulfed inside my dad's, and running into his friends, and noticing the linguistic flavor they sprinkled into their language. I recall sitting in the back of Dad's car while he played Richard Pryor cassettes; I didn't get the jokes, but the flavor of Pryor's big, infectious personality came through. I remember dancing to Marvin Gaye with Mom in the living room. I recall her watching that curmudgeonly racist Archie Bunker on TV and not really understanding why she loved to watch him, but I could see she was OK engaging with racist white culture. (I did not then understand that she was laughing *at* Bunker, who tended to be the butt of the jokes.) Even then I was drawn to the rebelliousness of George Jefferson, whom my mom also loved. It was thrilling and hilarious to watch Jefferson slam his front door in white people's faces, and liberating to see him not care at all about what the white people around him thought. He was an early warrior in the battle against an overconcern for the white gaze. I remember drinking in the bodacious, soulful pageantry of loud Baptist church services that were part concert, part worship, part Broadway. Through all those sources and more, the spice and color and style of Blackness sank into me, and thus into my writing. The cultural imperative that it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing was passed down not just through the artists but through everyone in the community. There is a way of manipulating the English language, as well as a soulful way of cooking, of dressing, of walking, of doing almost anything, and that sense flows through the community and into its artists. The adults around me walked and dressed and talked in a way that used style as a weapon, and exuded an idea that style itself was substance, and proclaimed that a life without style was barely worth living.

But there was also, I learned slowly, a massive Black ego in those folks around me, which existed as a way of protecting their spirit. The world is set up, it seems, to constantly remind us that we are lesser, and so folks are at work constructing egos that are far greater than their résumés suggest they should be but are necessary for psychic survival. These are egos as mental armor—this, even though the '70s were a time of a slow, steady rise in the community, a rise that was the child of the many wars fought in the '60s; and thus a Blackness born of the '70s was infused with hope, because of the ascensions happening in business and politics and culture during that era of affirmative action. I also learned

> *I want to see the business of home-making recognized as a joint, cooperative enterprise. More sharing by men will see fewer arrogant and privileged males. Men of imagination will see the danger of their privilege—and women, too, where the privilege is theirs—and will work to abolish it.*
>
> –Doris Stevens, "Wages for Wives," January 27, 1926

that Blackness means working twice as hard to get half a shot. On the morning I was heading off to my first day in the first grade at a new school, my mother pulled me close and said, "Remember, you have to be twice as good as those white kids." She introduced me then to John Henryism. According to the stories, Henry was a steel-driving man at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, a giant brother who drove steel faster than any man around. Then they had him race against a steel-driving machine: Henry won, but died of a heart attack. Now "John Henryism" refers to the concept in Black America that we feel we must work twice as hard, must double-prove ourselves.

Of course, Blackness is also laced with pain. I got a fill of that, too, when I was 6. From the many, many times I got spanked (with a hand or a belt, never a switch) to the many times we went out to eat and were sat near the kitchen, suspiciously away from everyone else, and my offended mom grabbed our hands and stormed out. We watched the Boston busing riots on the local news, witnessing the violent refusal to integrate and knowing that our Boston neighbors, our fellow citizens, were rejecting us. We lived in the midst of a city derisively called "up South," to convey that the racism there was just as deep as the South's. Felt like it. One day at summer camp, I was sitting on a bench in a locker room talking to some kid about people going over Niagara Falls in a barrel when a slightly older kid came out of nowhere and said, "I don't know anything about Niagara Falls, but I know you're a nigger." That, Skip Gates would say, was a "moment of instruction," a moment that occurs in most Black autobiographies/lives, a moment when you are told by the dominant culture what Blackness is worth, and the answer is: not much.



Langston Hughes, by Winold Reiss (1925)

Right there, you start to build your double consciousness, your Du Boisian twoness, which allows you to hold two opposing ideas in mind: to know that the dominant culture looks down on you, and yet that it is undeserved. Because if you can't see both sides, you'll lose your mind—and all of that shapes you as a person and an artist. The Black artist, in order to be serious, must bring to bear the sense of style as substance the community demands, as well as the pain we feel from being battered by racism. Because racism is critical to the social construction of Blackness—racism in its various forms, from micro-aggressions to direct confrontations, to incidents that happen to others but weigh heavily on you, to structural racism. Black culture and Black people are deeply shaped by racism, but culturally, we're as rich as Oprah. So, as Langston said, Black artists need look no further than their own childhoods to find a wealth of material. All of Black culture rests inside a Black mind as a great well from which to draw to create art, and that is brother Langston's big point. Surely, for every artist, wrapped up within all the things learned and experienced over the decades, all the technical and spiritual elements that inform his or her art, there is also identity.

Of course, this is true not only for Blacks, but for Latinos, Asians, Jews, women, gays—all those folks who commonly work with identity in their art. Identity is inescapable even for whites, men, Christians and straight people; their art, too, is shaped by it. And there's a loss for art and for the nation when they fail to examine how identity shapes their world and their art, when they treat identity like something transparent, something they can't see, when they act like those fish David Foster Wallace wrote about who say, "What the hell is water?" Even if the work does not wear identity on its sleeve, the work is still shaped by it. If the creators in dominant societies could make art that was more aware of their privilege, then an entirely new and powerful and more true conversation about America could arise.

Sometimes I wonder if their lack of connection to their culture is a matter of deep hearing. When I sit down to write, I can't help but hear voices: I hear my community demanding style and my ancestors demanding substance and our tragic dead demanding work that's meaningful and my artistic North Stars—Baldwin, Ellison, Morrison, Tate, Bearden, Davis, Coltrane, Gaye, Stone, Simone, Clinton—urging me to talk about the beauty and the pain and the complexity of being Black, and to do so in ways that challenge accepted notions and yet still make it funky. The legacy is a daunting beast, filled with genius. The pressure of competing with it is immense. If the Ghost Hunters snuck up behind me as I was trying to write, they might see a universe of slave liberators, political agitators, Baptist preachers, exuberant orators, beloved writers and incomparable musicians—so many musicians—arrayed around me all in chorus, urging and cajoling and daring me to somehow dig a little deeper.

And yet still there are pitfalls: the Black artist must confront the choice between being a messenger about the community, telling people what would be good for them to see (what some might call an artistic politician

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY / AP

or even a propagandist), and being a pure maker of artistic product, a window through which to view the artist's world, whether or not that window makes the community look better. In the near century since Langston said there was a high racial mountain for Black artists, the nature of that mountain has changed. Brother Langston saw a world that barely cared about Black culture. If he came back today, he would probably be pleasantly shocked to find a nation fixated on Black culture, with Motown and Def Jam creating the soundtracks for the lives of the baby boomers and Gen X, respectively. Today's Black artist confronts not a mountain of indifference to what moves him, but a door flung open too wide, tempting him to sell out his culture and community, to present a calm and reassuring face to the dominant white culture and not make it feel bad about racism, offering it instead a pleasing caricature of Black culture to aid in racial tourism: being able to explore the ghetto from the safe vantage of your car as you listen to hip-hop, or your couch as you watch a movie set in the hood. This fetishization and commodification of Blackness leaves Black artists faced with a choice between feeding the dominant culture with the soothing simulacra of Blackness that it wants and having a better chance at success—or presenting a more nuanced vision of Blackness and risking longer odds. Even when you think you've taken the latter route, as Dave Chappelle did on his legendary Comedy Central show, success can have you worrying that maybe you did sell out and then running to Mother Africa to get your head on straight again.

But the key note in brother Langston's essay is love. He loves Black people and Black aesthetics and Blackness. This is the source of his sense that Black culture provides all the memories, wisdom and nutrients an artist needs. It is hard won, that love: it can feel like swimming upstream against a raging current to reach a love of Blackness in a nation ruled by white supremacy and thus by white aesthetics, a nation where the message is that all things Caucasian are more beautiful. It sometimes feels like you must actively download separate mental software that allows you to see through the torrent of messages lauding white beauty in order to prize Africanness. Langston begins the essay discussing a so-called promising Black poet who does not want to be a "Negro poet," which Langston reads as a subconscious wish to be white. He bemoans that the Black artist "is never taught to see that beauty" of Blackness: "He is taught rather not to see it." And later, "The old subconscious white is best runs through [the] mind."

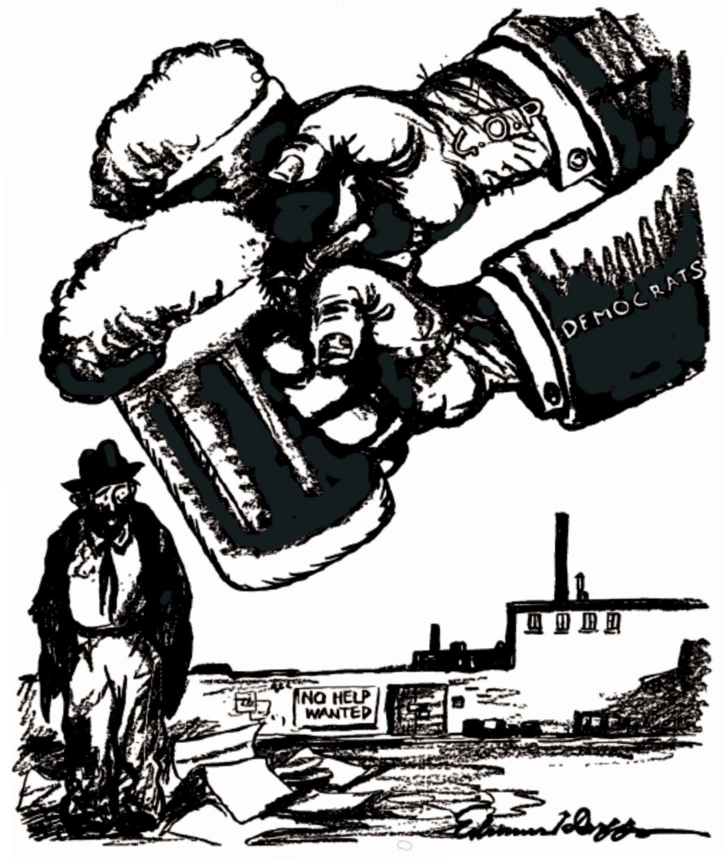
Unless the Black mind is vigilant, it can succumb to the idea that white is best. This was a key point of the Black Power movement and the Black Arts movement and the rise of African-American studies departments: to teach the beauty of Black physiognomy and the depth of Black history and the import of Black culture, and thus to help crush white supremacy wherever it lurks in Black minds—because liberation from the colonized mind is so empowering. Langston loves Blackness so much that he even has kindness for George S. Schuyler, who wrote the article that Langston is responding to. Schuyler's essay seems to me completely the product of a colonized mind: he rejects the very concept of Blackness and the notion of a shared community, suggesting that Blacks are just Americans of a different color and ignoring the binding experience of being Black in America. I need not know the exact streets another Black person has walked to feel some connection with them. I know that you are my brother or my sister even if we look at the world in different ways. I know that every Black person has been touched by racism in some way and that racism is a life-shaping experience, not an incidental one, and that there is a community built on the need to help one another survive the pain and hypocrisy of American racism. There is a Black community even if there is not Black monolithicity. My impulse was to respond to Schuyler's essay—which dismisses Black art with a blithe back of the hand—with anger. But Langston's response is elegant, because his love for Black people is so great that he even has love for those who don't believe Black culture exists.

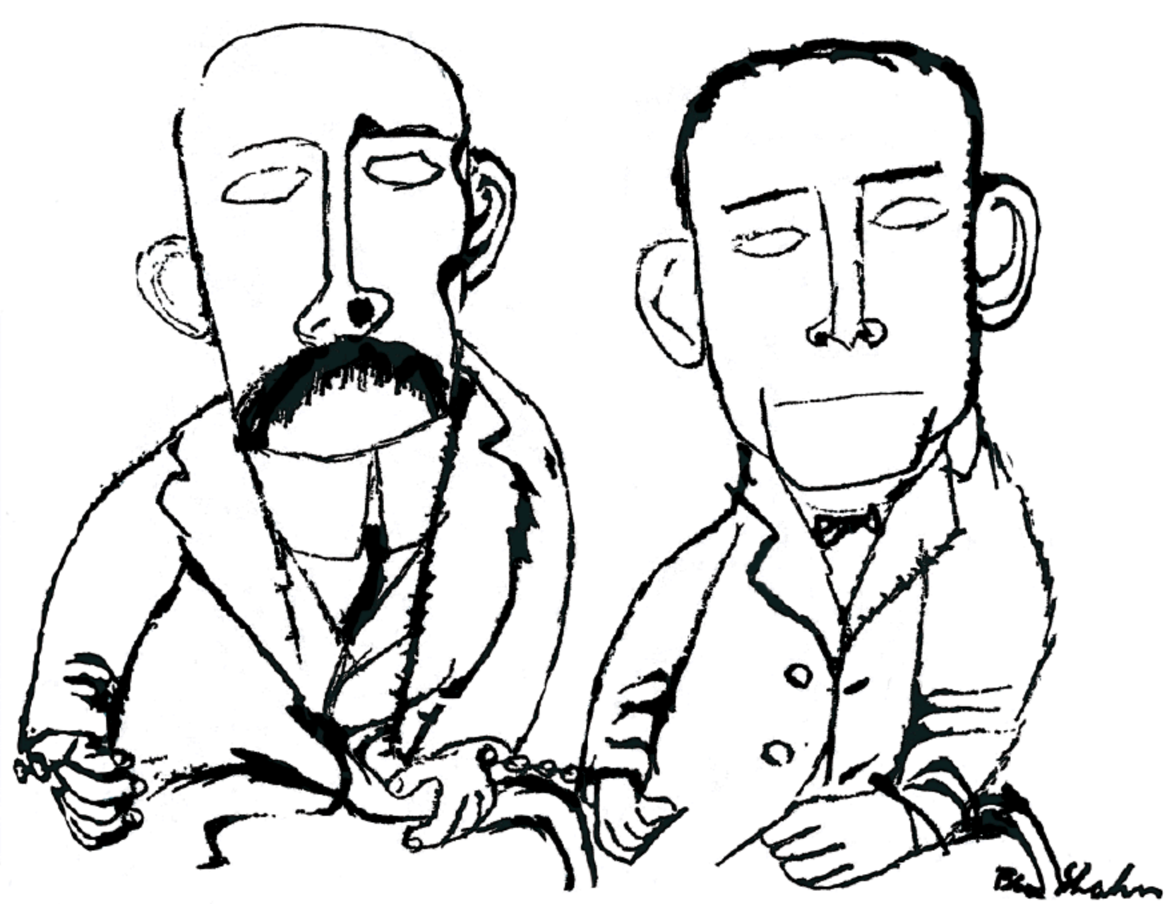
I feel sad for those who can't see their own cultural legacy, for they are poorer than the rest of us; they are ignoring a large bank account left to them in a will written by millions of people who came before them. We all stand on the shoulders of ancestors who stood on their ancestors' shoulders. The only question is whether we know we are standing on those shoulders, or if we think we are somehow really, really, really tall.

ART ARCHIVE

Have One on Me

Edmund Duffy, July 13, 1932





Massachusetts martyrs: Anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed on August 23, 1927. This drawing by Ben Shahn appeared on the cover of a 1952 issue marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of their deaths.

Massachusetts the Murderer

EDITORIAL (OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD)

AUGUST 31, 1927

Massachusetts has taken two lives with a vindictiveness and brutality unsurpassed in our history. It has blotted out the fishmonger and the cobbler whose names are now known around the world, men who in the minds of multitudes will take for the moment their places with the Carpenter. In the face of a world-wide protest of never-equalled dimensions, in the face of appeals from lawyers and judges of the highest standing, and from the heads of foreign governments, Governor Fuller and his council have sent Sacco and Vanzetti to their deaths. Henceforth the world over, when men wish to describe what is worst in any judicial system, they will declare that it is akin to Massachusetts justice.

It avails not to say that errors occur in the administration of justice in every land. This case has gone home to people because the human heart is not yet so corroded that it can read of the extinction of these two men without a shock to the very roots of its belief in justice and humanity. When a State takes the irrevocable step under conditions like these it is idle to talk of a deterrent. It is the State that has harmed itself, that has dealt a blow to law and order. It has roused a dreadful doubt which will never be dissipated, unless by the discovery of new evidence on one side or the other, during the lifetime of multitudes now living. Rightly or wrongly, the case of Sacco and Vanzetti goes down to history with the witch hunting in Salem and, in modern times, with the execution of the anarchists in Chicago in 1886.

As for Sacco and Vanzetti, why grieve for them? Their long agony is over and they were philosophers and students of history enough to know that their sacrifice was worth more to the rationalizing of human life than would have been their release and their return to comparative obscurity. The very act which blots out the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti insures their eternity in any social history of the United States. Their bearing in the face of death, their shining courage, their resignation, the range of their spirits—these are deathless things, and somehow or other the memory of them goes on in the hearts of men. No one can say what it all means or foretell where this case will end. But this is clear: This legal murder in Boston will profoundly and adversely affect the international relations of the United States, and its moral standing throughout the world for at least a decade to come. Massachusetts has triumphantly killed an Italian fishmonger and an Italian cobbler, but she has blackened the name of the United States across all the seas.

What's the Matter With *The Nation*?

HEYWOOD BROUN

JANUARY 2, 1929

I am asked to write a piece on "What's the matter with *The Nation*." Once I lost a job for something like that, but easy come easy go. Accordingly, I hazard the opinion that *The Nation* suffers chiefly from the fact that it is edited by gentlemen and, almost I fear, by ladies. These are not terms of approbation in my vocabulary. I think a journal of opinion serves the community best if it is not too finicky. Naturally one hopes to find it honest. Few have ever questioned the sincerity of *The Nation*. Nor am I contending that the magazine should go completely yellow. But I would like more gusto. Often *The Nation* moves speedily enough in the defense of good causes, but there is no one on the board of control who gives me the impression of actually enjoying the business of fighting. I like to see a liberal journal get aroused to the point of yodeling into battle and of biting in the clinches when it gets there.

This has happened in the history of *The Nation*, but all too infrequently. The scheme of *The Nation* seems to be to intellectualize mankind closer to Utopia. That can't be done. Even the most logical scheme for betterment gets nowhere unless it is expedited by the oil of emotion.

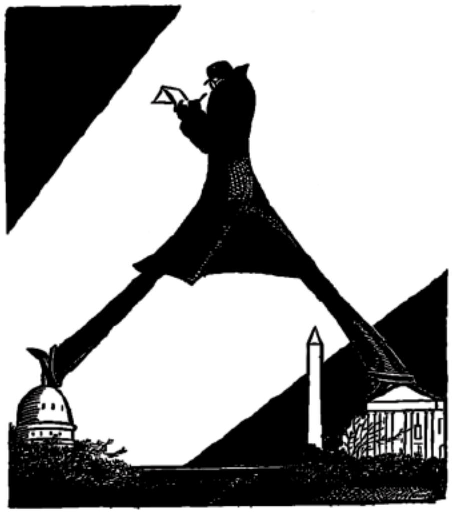
I am not contending that Mr. Villard and his associates constitute a bloodless crew. There's marrow in them but over the entire organization there clings the malarial mist of good taste. Clearly it is his intention to be both radical and respectable. And this, I hold, is a difficult combination. In justice to *The Nation* it must be admitted that patriotic organizations here and there have regarded it as inflammable and as undoubtedly in the pay of Soviet Russia. But such compliments are not deserved. For the most part *The Nation* has spoken softly and carried a swagger stick.

The Nation is a liberal rather than a radical weekly. To me liberalism is by no means a burnt-out political philosophy, but all liberal leaders in America must face the charge that they have done little more than take radicalism and dilute it with cold water. My advice to *The Nation* would be to go ahead every now and then and be outrageously unfair and violent and decidedly ribald. No journal of protest is doing its job unless it gets barred from the mails once every so often.

If the Supreme Court Objects

PAUL Y. ANDERSON

JULY 19, 1933



JULY 19, 1933

It is often and pertinently asked what the United States Supreme Court will say about the constitutionality of some of the Roosevelt measures. Certainly there are at least three reactionary old men on that bench who would take profound satisfaction in standing by their plutocratic concepts of society if they knew the mob was battering at the door, and there may be more than three. That eventuality already has been seriously considered by persons interested in the success of the new deal. There are ways of meeting it. Congress could pass an act requiring members of the court to retire upon passing the age of retirement. That would remove two of the worst. It would also remove the best, Justice Brandeis, but that could be met by a provision enabling the President by executive order to extend the tenure of designated Justices who had reached the age limit. Or the size of the court could be increased by law to permit the appointment of additional Justices whose ideas developed subsequent to the year 1880. It has been done. If this reporter knows anything about the temper of the present Administration, it will never permit the whole economic structure of this country to be disrupted and demoralized because less than a half a dozen dyspeptic old men are determined to uphold precedents established before the invention of the telephone. As has often been made clear on these pages, I do not relish these encroachments of the executive upon the prerogatives of the other branches, but sometimes a condition arises which must be dealt with. The blame for such bad precedents properly rests on those who produce the conditions.

> "No one can deny that we shall not take a step toward any new order with either Mr. Hoover or Governor Roosevelt in the White House; we shall merely again be asked to be content with a little patching here and a little patching there, on a machine which cannot be made to work efficiently."
>
> –Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Pot and the Kettle," October 5, 1932

Was Europe a Success?

ALBERT EINSTEIN

OCTOBER 3, 1934

The humanitarian ideal of Europe appears indeed to be unalterably bound up with the free expression of opinion, with the free-will of the individual, with the effort toward objectivity in thought without consideration of mere utility, and with the encouragement of differences in the realm of mind and taste. One cannot establish with reason the worth of these values and maxims, for they are matters of fundamental principle in the approach to life and are points of departure which can only be affirmed or denied by emotion. I only know that I affirm them with my whole soul, and would find it intolerable to belong to a society which consistently denied them.

You ask if it is justifiable to set aside for a time the principles of individual freedom in deference to the high endeavor to improve economic organization. A fine and shrewd Russian scholar very skillfully defended this point of view to me in comparing the success of compulsion and terror—at least at the outset—in a functioning Russian Communism with the failure of German Social Democracy after the war. He did not convince me. No purpose is so high that unworthy methods in achieving it can be justified in my eyes. Violence sometimes may have cleared away obstructions quickly, but it never has proved itself creative.

The Tragedy of the Political Exiles

EMMA GOLDMAN

OCTOBER 10, 1934

During my ninety days in the United States old friends and new spoke much of my years in exile. It seemed incredible to them that I had been able to withstand the vicissitudes of banishment and come back unbroken in health and spirit and with my ideals unmarred. I confess I was deeply moved by their generous tribute. But also I was embarrassed, because the plight of hosts of political exiles scattered over Europe is so tragic that my struggle to survive was hardly worth mentioning.

The world carnage put an end to the golden era when a Bakunin and a Herzen, a Marx and a Kropotkin, and all the others could come and go without hindrance. In those days who cared about passports or visas? Who worried about one particular spot on earth? The whole world was one's country. Not in their wildest dreams did it occur to these revolutionaries that the time might come when the world would be turned into a huge penitentiary, or that political conditions might become more despotic and inhuman than during the worst period of the Czars. The war for democracy and the advent of left and right dictatorships destroyed whatever freedom of movement political refugees had formerly enjoyed. Tens of thousands of men, women, and children have been forced to roam the earth, admitted nowhere. If they are fortunate enough to find asylum, it is nearly always for a short period only; they are always exposed to annoyance and chicanery, and their lives made a veritable hell.

All political movements are at each other's throats—more bitter, vindictive, and downright savage against each other than they are against their common enemies. The most unpardonable offender in this respect is the so-called Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Not only is it keeping up a process of extermination of all political opponents in and outside its territory, but it is also engaged in wholesale character assassination. Men and women with a heroic record of revolutionary activity, persons who have consecrated themselves to their ideals, who went through untold sufferings under the Romanovs, are maligned, misrepresented, dubbed with vile names, and hounded without mercy.

To be sure the Mussolinis and Hitlers are guilty of the same crime. But the barbarity of fascism and Nazism is being condemned and fought by the persons who have remained perfectly indifferent to the Golgotha of the Russian politicals. And not only indifferent; they actually justify the barbarities of the Russian dictatorship as inevitable. All these good people are under the spell of the Soviet myth. They lack awareness of the inconsistency and absurdity of their protesting against brutalities in capitalist countries when they are condoning the same brutalities in the Soviet Republic.

Few countries are left where one can still hold on to life. Indeed, nothing that the holocaust and its aftermath have brought to humanity can compare with the cruel plight of the political refugees. Yet undying are their faith and their hope in the masses. No shadow of doubt obscures their belief that the workers will wake up from their leaden sleep, that they will once more take up the battle for liberty and well-being.

ELI JACOBI

ENCOUNTER

Emma Goldman's Stateless Ghosts

VIVIAN GORNICK

When she first arrived in New York City on the overnight train from Rochester, Emma Goldman was 20 years old. It was August 15, 1889—a Sunday morning—and after an exhausting day spent wandering the streets of the unfamiliar city, she wound up at Sachs's café on the Lower East Side, where all the anarchists in the city liked to gather. Within her first hour there, she met Alexander Berkman, who would became the most important person in her life. That same evening, Berkman invited Emma to hear a speech by Johann Most, the editor of the German-language anarchist paper *Die Freiheit*, and the man who would launch her apprenticeship as a public speaker.

The speed with which Emma Goldman found a home in the communal life of the young would-be revolutionaries milling around lower Manhattan in the 1890s—all immigrants, all speaking Russian or German or Yiddish—was actually unremarkable, given the time and place. Throughout the world, radicalism was exploding, and their counterparts in Europe were gathering in ever-growing numbers in much the same way. Emma and her friends could have been living in Paris or Petersburg, Zurich or Budapest, London or Berlin; citizenship had no meaning for them. Wherever they landed, they ate, drank and slept revolution. The jobs they held—driving trucks, sewing clothes, baking bread—were "day jobs" in every sense of the phrase. Revolution was who they were and what they did.

When America entered the First World War in 1917, it soon became illegal to speak against it; Emma and Berkman did nothing but. After three decades in the United States, the pair were brought to trial on charges of sedition, sent to prison for two years and then deported to the Soviet Union. Grief-stricken as she was at her expulsion from the United States, the only country she had ever loved, Emma was intensely excited at the thought of joining the Russian Revolution, which she considered an event destined to recover humankind's lost nobility. Within the year, however, both she and Berkman were painfully disillusioned. Twenty-three months after their arrival, they left the Soviet Union. For Emma, exposing the revolution's betrayal at the hands of the Bolsheviks would become a lifelong obsession—one that ultimately dismayed friends and foes alike.

In the United States, every agency that had a stake in their never setting foot in America again—the immigration service, the Justice Department, even the military—seemed to become unhinged upon learning that Emma and Berkman were no longer in the USSR. J. Edgar Hoover himself alerted every intelligence agency in Europe to the danger of giving these world-famous terrorists asylum, and he had their photographs sent to officials at every border and port of entry throughout the West.

Emma and Berkman came out of Russia into Riga, where they were immediately informed by the Latvian authorities that they were unwelcome there. Next came Stockholm and Berlin and more of the same. Emma and Berkman had been placed on an international blacklist that turned their lives into a bureaucratic nightmare. In each capital, the authorities were waiting to delay, expel or imprison them. Their days were often spent at consulate desks, where clerks half their age felt free to ignore or sneer at or ridicule them. "Come back tomorrow at 3," one would say. "Wednesday at 10," instructed another. "A week from today at 6," ordered a third.

Now they were truly in exile, and would remain so for the rest of their lives, as triple outcasts: alienated from an exhausted postwar world in which political activism held no appeal; harassed by government authorities, who continued to see them as a threat to the state; and separated from both the European and American left, which shrank, appalled, from their outspoken denunciation of the Bolsheviks. And so they wandered, before coming to a permanently uncertain rest as illegals in the south of France, the only country that did not actively pursue them.

In 1934, Emma Goldman was granted a visa in order to make a ninety-day visit to the United States. It was her experiences during this time that inspired "The Tragedy of the Political Exiles," her landmark piece for *The Nation*. In it, she describes how the world has changed since 1918. Before the war, she writes, radicals could easily come and go: "In those days, who cared about passports or visas? Who worried about one particular spot on earth? The whole world was one's country.... Not in their wildest dream did it occur to these revolutionaries that the time might come when the world would be turned into a huge penitentiary." Or, conversely, that they would become escaped prisoners on the run: "Tens of thousands of men, women, and children have been turned into modern Ahasueruses [Wandering Jews], forced to roam the earth, admitted nowhere...their lives made a veritable hell."

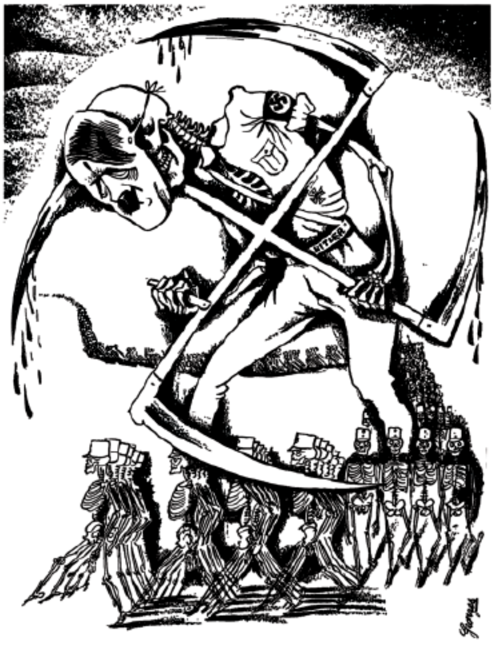
The essay goes on to deliver an eloquent portrait of this underground life: its fears and torments, its humiliations and tensions, above all its haunting sense of ghostly invisibility. Ineluctably, the reader comes to count these poor undocumented souls among the damned of the earth.

Some fifteen years after Goldman's article, Hannah Arendt, fleeing Nazi Germany, wrote in a remarkably similar vein on the horrors of political statelessness. Measured philosopher though she was, Arendt felt them down to the bone, and her evocation of the void into which statelessness had dropped her is every bit as powerful as that of the impassioned anarchist who preceded her. I daresay that at this very moment, any number of undocumented immigrants and refugees all over the Western world could be sitting down to do the same, a copy of "The Tragedy of the Political Exiles" by their side.

ART ARCHIVE

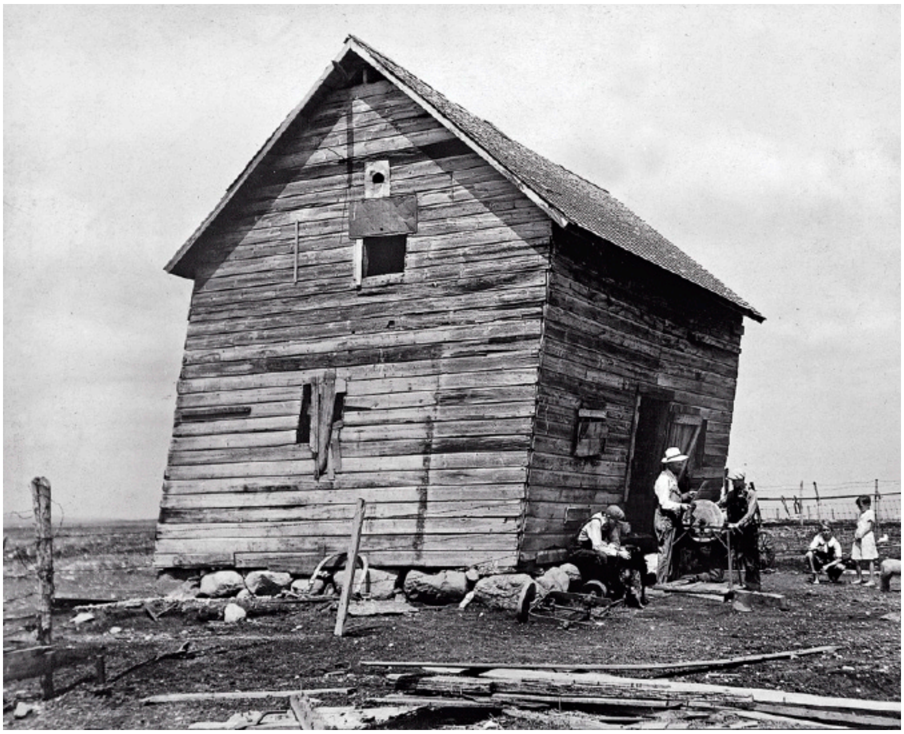
Hitler Means War

Georges, April 5, 1933



Dust Changes America

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE



Ill fares the land: In 1934, *Fortune* magazine sent Bourke-White to photograph areas of the West being ravaged by the "black blizzards" of the Dust Bowl.

MAY 22, 1935

Vitamin K they call it—the dust which sifts under the door sills, and stings in the eyes, and seasons every spoonful of food. The dust storms have distinct personalities, rising in formation like rolling clouds, creeping up silently like formless fog, approaching violently like a tornado. Where has it come from? It provides topics of endless speculation. Red, it is the topsoil from Oklahoma; brown, it is the fertile earth of western Kansas; the good grazing land of Texas and New Mexico sweeps by as a murky yellow haze. Or, tracing it locally, "My uncle will be along pretty soon," they say; "I just saw his farm go by."

The storm comes up in a terrifying way. Yellow clouds roll. The wind blows such a gale that it is all my helper can do to hold my camera to the ground. The sand whips into my lens. I repeatedly wipe it away trying to snatch an exposure before it becomes completely coated again. The light becomes yellower, the wind colder. Soon there is no photographic light, and we hurry for shelter to the nearest farmhouse.

The migrations of the farmer have begun. We passed them on the road, all their household goods piled on wagons, one lucky family on a truck. Lucky, because they had been able to keep their truck when the mortgage was foreclosed. All they owned in the world was packed on it; the children sat on a pile of bureaus topped with mattresses, and the sides of the truck were strapped up with bed springs. The entire family looked like a Ku Klux Klan meeting, their faces done up in masks to protect them from the whirling sand.

And this same dust that coats the lungs and threatens death to cattle and men alike, that ruins the stock of the storekeeper lying unsold on his shelves, that creeps into the gear shifts of automobiles, that sifts through the refrigerator into the butter, that makes housekeeping, and gradually life itself, unbearable, this swirling drifting dust is changing the agricultural map of the United States. It piles ever higher on the floors and beds of a steadily increasing number of deserted farmhouses. A half-buried plowshare, a wheat binder ruffled over with sand, the skeleton of a horse near a dirt-filled water hole are stark evidence of the meager life, the wasted savings, the years of toil that the farmer is leaving behind him.

> *"History has played one of her stupefying tricks: for it is now clear that democracy is on the defensive as much against the totalitarianism of Russian communism as against that of fascism. And since socialism without democracy is a monstrosity, socialism too is on the defensive."*
>
> –Lewis Corey, "Marxism Reconsidered," February 17, 1940

75th Anniversary Issue
[February 10, 1940]

1937
Freda Kirchwey becomes editor of *The Nation*, making her the first American woman at the helm of a national weekly news magazine.

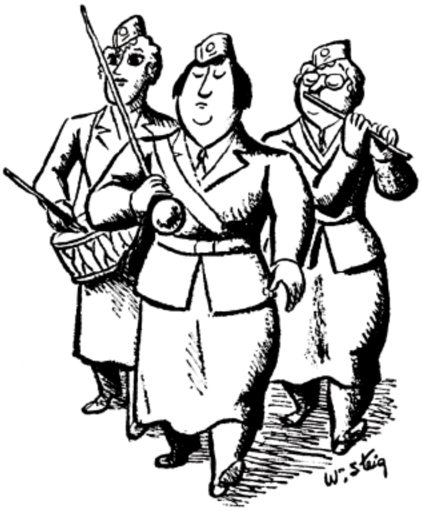
12-7-1941
Japan attacks the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, and the United States enters World War II. "The fruits of appeasement have been harvested," Kirchwey writes, "and the dead have not yet been counted and named."

COVER: GEORGES SCHREIBER; PHOTO: THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES

Big Parade—1936

JOHN DOS PASSOS

October 3, 1936



Through the swirl of dust and torn strips of last year's phone books and old mail-order catalogues that fly into your eyes and mouth and find their way down the back of your neck, they come, marching between hedges of faces, sweating in their cheap shimmery costumes out of old romantic musical comedies—the bands, the bands, the junior bands, the cowboy bands, the redskin bands, the ladies' auxiliary bands (every lady has a fresh permanent frizzle, every lady sucks in in front and sticks out behind); cheeks puff, snare drums rattle, cymbals clash, and in front of every band stalks, minces, goose-steps, hobblewalks the inevitable drum major. There are more cops than you can imagine—and it takes them eleven and a half hours to pass a given point.

What has happened is that in spite of the hopes of the founders that the [American] Legion would be an aggressive arm against labor unionism and dangerous thoughts and a defense for the vested interests, it has settled down in this its year of greatest membership, of its biggest parade and smoothest convention—not a controversial matter reared its head from the floor—to being just another fraternal organization with its clubrooms and bridge parties and social work and poker evenings and fascinating internal politics. As such it is the field for the careers and supplies the meal tickets of thousands of professional organization workers. The legionnaires' interests, and those of the increasingly important women's auxiliary, lie in the bands and the parades and the junior baseball teams and in the comfortable feeling of belonging so necessary to people now that small-town life is broken up and the family is crumbling and people live so much by themselves in agglomerated industrial masses, where they are left after working hours with no human contact between the radio and the car and the impersonal round of chain stores and picture palaces. The fraternal organizations give people a feeling of belonging to something outside themselves. They are the folk life of America. We've got to have it. It's lonely being a unit in a parade that takes eleven and a half hours to pass through the public square. Makes you feel too small. Until something else more urgent arises to draw people together and as long as the little fellow can pay his dues, the professional organizers will continue to lead Elks and Redmen and Veiled Prophets and Mystic Shriners and legionnaires and their wives and little ones in brainless antics, decked in fatuous costumes, behind really excellent marching bands (that's one thing we do well) from convention city to convention city across the country. And steadily the American passion for a smooth-running machine, if nothing else, will tend to eliminate troublesome ideas, outstanding personalities, and dissenters who ask awkward questions about how and in what direction the parade is being led.

ART ARCHIVE

The Men Who Made the Nation

Howard Cook, May 6, 1936

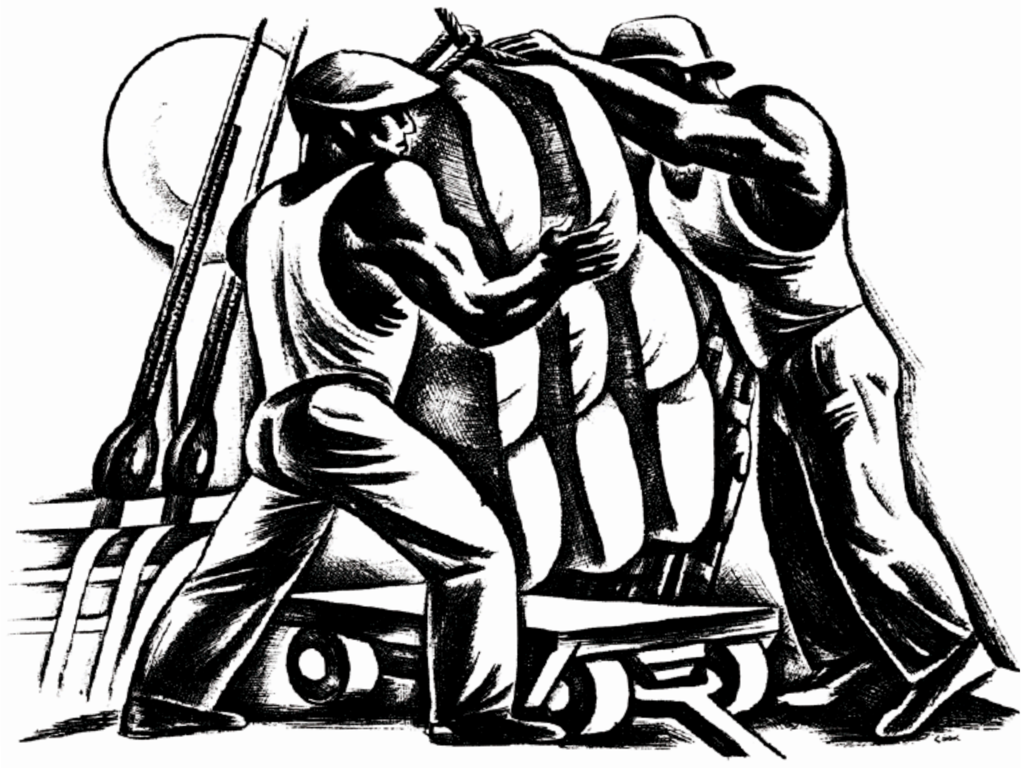


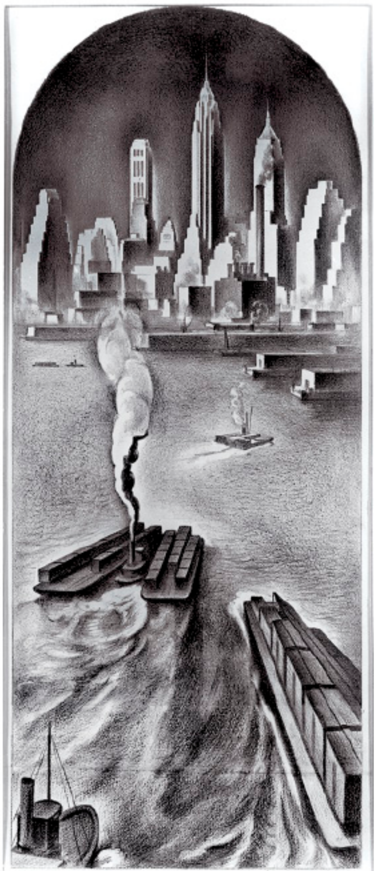
ILLUSTRATION: TOP, WILLIAM STEIG

Art on Relief

MARGARET MARSHALL

September 5, 1936

Art, for the average American, is a framed reproduction, hung too high and slightly askew, of a Maxfield Parrish heroine swinging in a blue-green-pink landscape which it is to be hoped nature will never be forced to emulate. If our average American had the right great-grandmother still living in the right original home he might have found out that the average American has not always lived in an artistic vacuum either of taste or of participation. Our ancestors not only lived in finely proportioned houses, however simple, and surrounded themselves with furniture of extraordinarily good design and quality; they also had portraits on their parlor walls which were often not mere likenesses but art in the best sense, and murals in their front halls painted with fresh colors and bold designs that so-called moderns might justly envy.



Louis Lozowick, *Lower Manhattan* (1936), made while he was working for the graphics division of the WPA

Between the early flowering of the decorative arts and our present relative poverty a capitalist industrial age has intervened. Art rapidly became the privilege of the rich. The general public was cut off from its heritage; the artist, through being forced to compete in a narrow market on the hunt for sensations, was denied his natural growth. For all social purposes art went underground while mass production spread a film of "standardization" over the face of the land.

But just as there is ample evidence that there still exists a rich regional diversity of extraordinary vitality, so it becomes increasingly apparent that artistic taste, talent, and tradition are still live forces in ordinary American life. The evidence is to be found in the record of the Federal Art Project, which has stirred up an amount of interest and activity in art entirely out of proportion to the brief months of its existence. The Works Progress Administration in the name of relief has had an amazing return of good art on its investment in the artistic resources of the American people.

The project, being federal in its set-up and allowing for much local autonomy, is forwarding the literal decentralization of art. By creating a widespread interest in art it is expanding a market which has been hitherto concentrated in large centers, mainly New York. By the same token it is drastically changing the character of that market from snob to popular. In still another sense it is helping to make art and the artist an integral part of society.

In hundreds of institutions the average American is now having a taste of art, of indigenous American art, and he is obviously liking it. Certainly such drawings will tend to bring to life the dead walls and dull hours of many a classroom. They will also further the primary aim of the Federal Art Project—to destroy the false concept of art as a luxury and put it in its natural place as a free and democratic expression of the life of a society.

The Pacifist's Dilemma

NORMAN THOMAS

January 16, 1937

Rarely, if ever, has the struggle for peace been so complicated, or have the lovers of peace been more sharply divided. They are caught in the confusion of a world more keenly aware than ever before of the suicidal costs of world war, yet more inclined to accept it as inevitable.

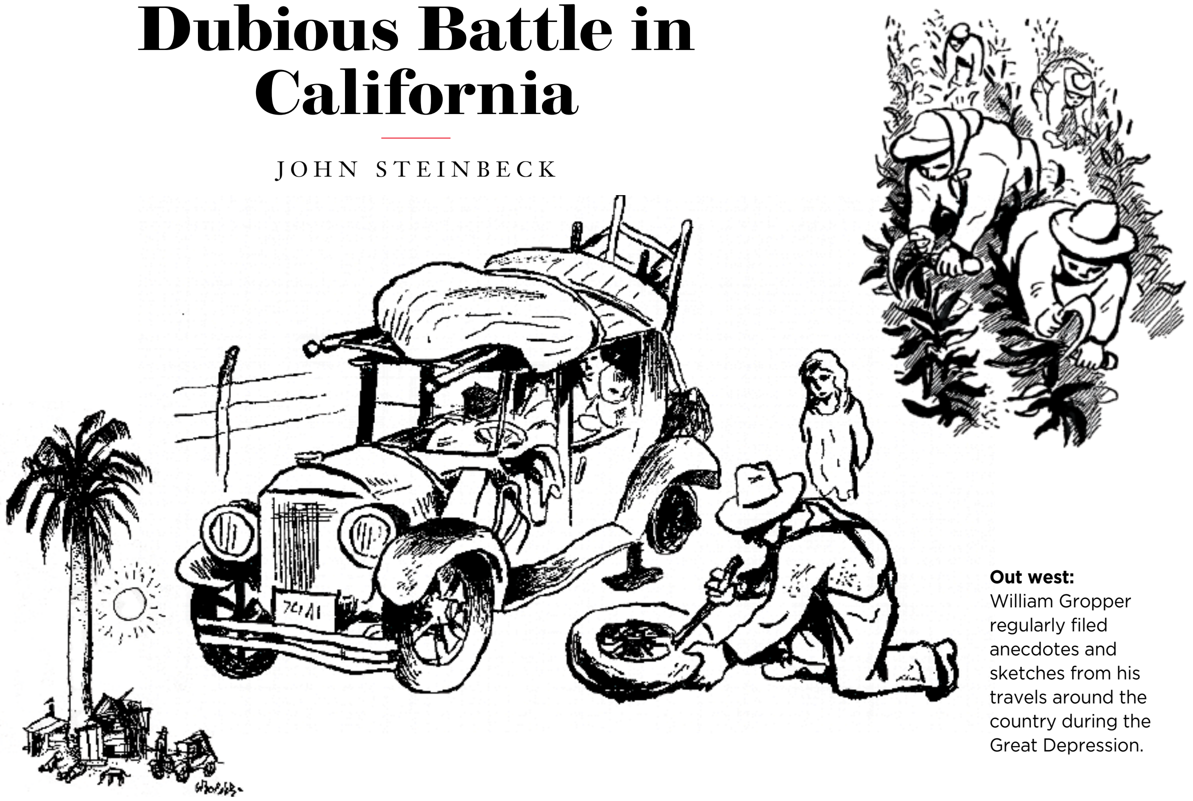
The whole issue has been immensely complicated by the triumph of fascism in Italy and more especially, in Germany. Fascism glorifies both militarism and war. It is as surely a menace to the peace as to the liberty of mankind. One may be against both war and fascism, and yet I find in every dispatch from Spain grim proof that practically, under conditions all too likely to occur again and again, resolute and effective opposition to fascism means war. Is it any wonder that in this kind of world consistency among peace lovers is not a common virtue?

The pacifism which makes mere abstention from war the supreme command will not deliver mankind from new cycles of war and new dark ages of oppression. It is unrealistic and mad to say that it does not matter who wins in Spain if only the guns are stilled. It matters profoundly not only for Spain but for mankind that the fascist aggression of which Franco is the nominal and brutal leader be defeated. Persons who believe this must support the gallant resistance of the workers and other loyalists.

Not a method of keeping out of war but the establishment of a warless world must be our goal.

Dubious Battle in California

JOHN STEINBECK



Out west: William Gropper regularly filed anecdotes and sketches from his travels around the country during the Great Depression.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1936

Let us see what the emigrants from the dust bowl find when they arrive in California. The ranks of permanent and settled labor are filled. In most cases all resources have been spent in making the trip from the dust bowl. It is quite usual for a man, his wife, and from three to eight children to arrive in California with no possessions but the rattletrap car they travel in and the ragged clothes on their bodies. They often lack bedding and cooking utensils.

Attempts to organize have been met with a savagery from the large growers beyond anything yet attempted. The usual repressive measures have been used against these migrants: shooting by deputy sheriffs in "self-defense," jailing without charge, refusal of trial by jury, torture and beating by night riders. But even in the short time that these American migrants have been out here there has been a change. It is understood that they are being attacked not because they want higher wages, not because they are Communists, but simply because they want to organize. And to the men, since this defines the thing not to be allowed, it also defines the thing that is completely necessary to the safety of the workers.

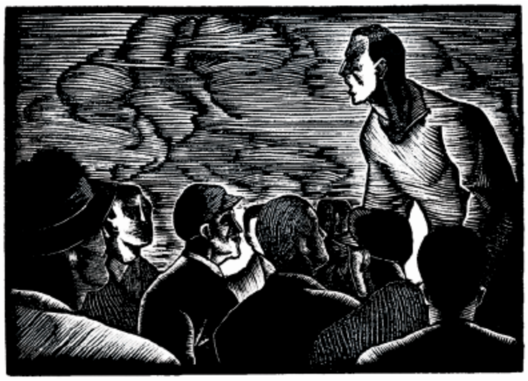
The effect has been far from that desired. There is now in California anger instead of fear. The stupidity of the large grower has changed terror into defensive fury. The granges, working close to the soil and to the men, and knowing the temper of the men of this new race, have tried to put through wages that will allow a living, however small. But the large growers, the only group making a considerable profit from agriculture, are devoting their money to tear gas and rifle ammunition. The men will organize and the large growers will meet organization with force. It is easy to prophesy this. There is tension in the valley, and fear for the future.

It is fervently to be hoped that the great group of migrant workers so necessary to the harvesting of California's crops may be given the right to live decently, that they may not be so badgered, tormented, and hurt that in the end they become avengers of the hundreds of thousands who have been tortured and starved before them.

ART ARCHIVE

Strike Call

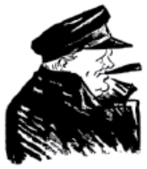
Dan Reed, May 27, 1936



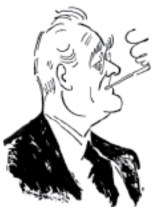
ART ARCHIVE

Public Figures of the Day

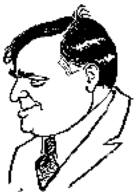
Illustrations by Alois Derso and Emery Kelen



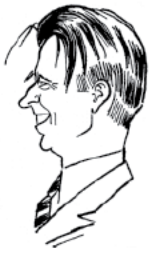
Winston Churchill



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Fiorello La Guardia



Henry Wallace

Red Totalitarianism: A Reply to Sidney Hook

FREDA KIRCHWEY

JUNE 17, 1939

In its May 27, 1939, issue, The Nation *printed a letter from the Committee for Cultural Freedom, an anticommunist group led by John Dewey and Sidney Hook, which stated: "Unless totalitarianism is combated wherever and in whatever form it manifests itself, it will spread in America." In an editorial, "Red Totalitarianism," Freda Kirchwey rejected the implied equation of communism with fascism; while some of their tactics were "invariably provocative and often destructive," Kirchwey wrote that "the Communists perform necessary functions in the confused struggle of our time." Three weeks later, Hook replied with a letter to the editor, and Kirchwey answered as follows:*

To a person who sees life in clear blacks and whites the issue is doubtless a simple one: decent people don't associate with criminals and gangsters or try to extenuate their crimes. One cannot but envy the man who is able to dispatch his social problems so easily. But to me, as to many other non-Communists and unattached liberals, the issue is a confused and troubling one. The Communists display the qualities of most fanatics, qualities that stem as directly from Cotton Mather as from Karl Marx. They are intolerant and ruthless, often unscrupulous, often violent and lacking in political judgment. They are also zealous, brave, and willing to put up with hardship and abuse. The Communist Party and its press have "assassinated"—or tried to—many a character, including that of *The Nation*. But they have also fought for decent conditions for workers and the unemployed, for equality of rights for Negroes, for relief and aid to the victims of the civil war in Spain. They have stood consistently for justice and nonaggression in international relations—as, indeed, has the Soviet government as well. Neither can one forget that Communists and Communist sympathizers from the United States fought in Spain in numbers out of all proportion to their numbers here; and, it might be added, they fought side by side with Socialists and Anarchists and democrats of all shades, even while political strife between all these factions poisoned the air behind the lines.

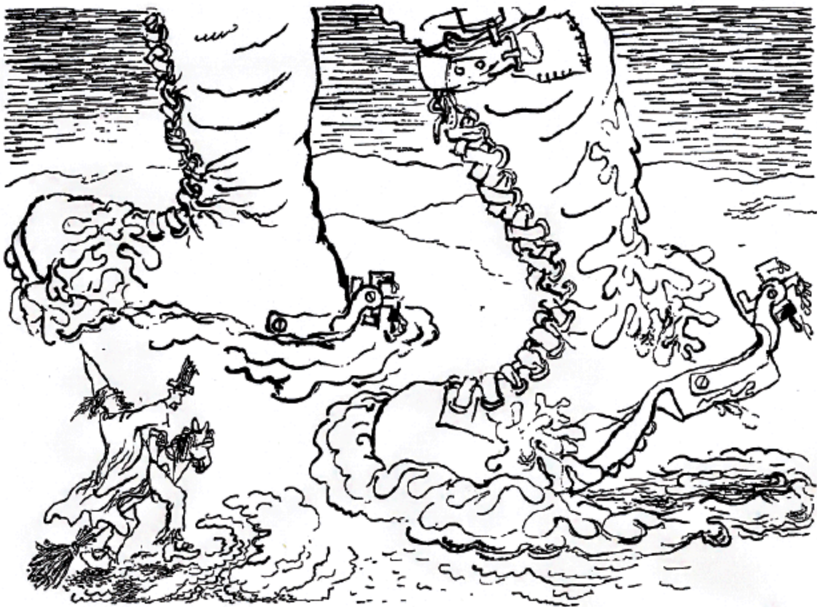
The Spanish struggle taught many lessons, of which perhaps the most important was this one: It is not necessary for liberal lambs and Communist lions to lie down together. Enough if they will move ahead toward their common objectives without wasting time and strength in an attempt to exterminate each other along the way. The job of making this country unsafe for fascism calls for tremendous constructive effort as well as defensive strength. If Communists and non-Communists and even anti-Communists could forget their mutual recriminations and concentrate on the major task of our generation, there would be better hope of its successful accomplishment.

> *"The death of Mr. Roosevelt may mean the coming of age of the progressive political forces in America. If it means that, then slowly the dismay of the people, here and throughout the world, will be replaced by a new sense of power and confidence."*
>
> –Freda Kirchwey, "End of an Era," April 21, 1945

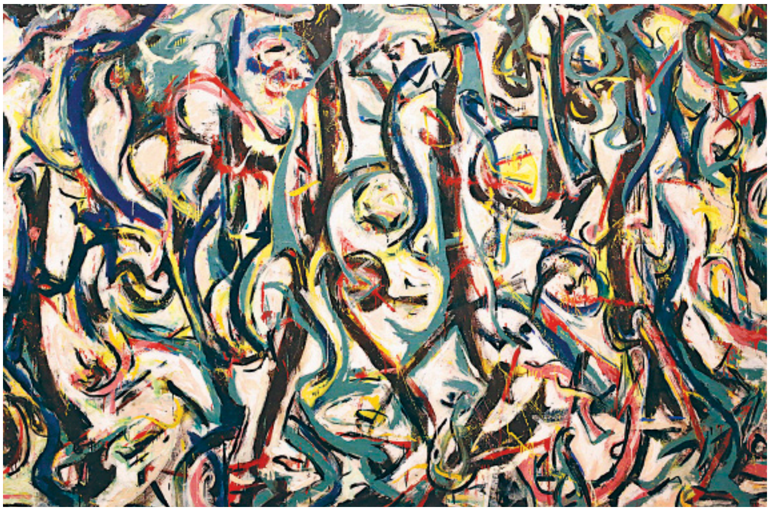
ART ARCHIVE

The Voice of Reason

George Grosz, January 1, 1938



COURTESY OF THE BLACK SUN PRESS



Jackson Pollock, *Mural* (1943)

Abstract Mud

CLEMENT GREENBERG

NOVEMBER 27, 1943

There are both surprise and fulfillment in Jackson Pollock's not so abstract abstractions. He is the first painter I know of to have got something positive from the muddiness of color that so profoundly characterizes a great deal of American painting. It is the equivalent, even if in a negative, helpless way, of that American chiaroscuro which dominated Melville, Hawthorne, Poe. The mud abounds in Pollock's larger works, and these, though the least consummated, are his most original and ambitious. Being young and full of energy, he takes orders he can't fill. In the large, audacious "Guardians of the Secret" he struggles between two slabs of inscribed mud (Pollock almost always *inscribes* his purer colors); and space tautens but does not burst into a picture; nor is the mud quite transmuted. Both this painting and "Male and Female" (Pollock's titles are pretentious) zigzag between the intensity of the easel picture and the blandness of the mural. The smaller works are much more conclusive: the smallest one of all, "Conflict," and "Wounded Animal," with its chalky incrustation, are among the strongest abstract paintings I have yet seen by an American. Here Pollock's force has just the right amount of space to expand in; whereas in larger format he spends himself in too many directions at once. Pollock has gone through the influences of Miró, Picasso, Mexican painting, and what not, and has come out on the other side at the age of thirty-one, painting mostly with his own brush. In his search for style he is liable to relapse into an influence, but if the times are propitious, it won't be for long.

For the Jews—Life or Death?

I.F. STONE

JUNE 10, 1944

This letter, addressed specifically to fellow-newspapermen and to editors the country over, is an appeal for help. The establishment of temporary internment camps for refugees in the United States is in danger of bogging down. Every similar proposal here has bogged down until it was too late.

Anything newspapermen can write about this in their own papers will help. It will help to save lives, the lives of people like ourselves. I wish I were eloquent, I wish I could put down on paper the picture that comes to me from the restrained and diplomatic language of the documents. As I write, the morning papers carry a dispatch from Lisbon reporting that the "deadline"—the idiom was never more literal—has passed for the Jews of Hungary.

I need not dwell upon the authenticated horrors of the Nazi internment camps and death chambers for Jews. That is not tragic but a kind of insane horror. It is our part in this which is tragic. The essence of tragedy is not the doing of evil by evil men but the doing of evil by good men, out of weakness, indecision, sloth, inability to act in accordance with what they know to be right.

There is much we could have done to save the Jews of Europe before the war. There is much we could have done since the war began. There are still things we could do today which would give new lives to a few and hope to many. The hope that all is not black in the world for his children can be strong sustenance for a man starving in a camp or entering a gas chamber. But to feel that your friends and allies are wishy-washy folk who mean what they say but haven't got the gumption to live up to it must brew a poisonous despair.

The longer we delay the fewer Jews there will be left to rescue, the slimmer the chances to get them out. Between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 European Jews have been killed since August, 1942, when the extermination campaign began.

There are people here who say the President cannot risk a move before election. I believe that an insult to the American people. It is a question of Mr. Roosevelt's courage and good faith.

Official Washington's capacity for finding excuses for inaction is endless, and many people in the State and War departments who play a part in this matter can spend months sucking their legalistic thumbs over any problem. So many things that might have been done were attempted too late. I ask fellow-newspapermen to show the President by their expressions of opinion in their own papers that if he hesitates for fear of an unpleasant political reaction he badly misconstrues the real feelings of the American people.

ILLUSTRATION: FUTURO; PHOTO: NICK UT / AP

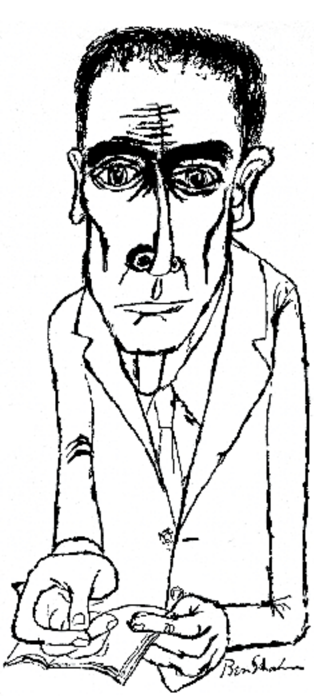
One World or None

FREDA KIRCHWEY

AUGUST 18, 1945

The bomb that hurried Russia into the Far Eastern war a week ahead of schedule and drove Japan to surrender has accomplished the specific job for which it was created. The suffering, the wholesale slaughter it entailed, have been outweighed by its spectacular success; Allied leaders can rightly claim that the loss of life on both sides would have been many times greater if the atomic bomb had not been used and Japan had gone on fighting. There is no answer to this argument. The danger is that it will encourage those in power to assume that, once accepted as valid, the argument can be applied equally well in the future. If that assumption should be permitted, the chance of saving civilization—and perhaps the world itself—from destruction is a remote one.

The atomic bomb represents a revolution in science—the greatest revolution ever accomplished. It calls for a comparable revolution in men's thinking and in their capacity for political and social readjustment. Not a hint of that has so far emerged in high places. No one has spoken the simple truth that the exploding atom has exposed to the whole world.



J. Robert Oppenheimer, the blacklisted "father of the atomic bomb," in 1954

President Truman is whistling to keep our courage up. He knows that other nations are working on atomic explosives. The secret was guarded long enough to enable us to smash Japan. It will not last much longer. The present "trustees" of this force had better stop thinking in terms of control by themselves and begin to figure how a world is to be run in which every nation equipped for research and modern production will soon be able to make and propel atomic bombs. The policy announced by the President is power politics raised to a cosmic degree; if continued it will insure an era of desperate competition in destruction, which can have only one outcome.

No longer can we afford a world organized to prevent aggression only if all of the great powers wish it to be prevented. No longer can we afford a social system which would permit private business, in the name of freedom, to control a source of energy capable of creating comfort and security for all the world's people. This seems self-evident, and so it is. But it calls for changes so sweeping that only an immense effort of will and imagination can bring them about. Within each nation the people must establish public ownership and social development of the revolutionary force war has thrust into their hands. This program will sound drastic only to people who have not yet grasped the meaning of the new discovery. It is not drastic. We face a choice between one world or none.

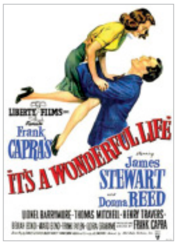
The Salt of the Earth

JAMES AGEE

FEBRUARY 15, 1947

It's a Wonderful Life is a movie about a local boy who stays local, doesn't make good, and becomes so unhappy that he wishes he had never been born. An angel named Clarence shows him what his family, friends, and town would have been like if he hadn't been.

One important function of good art or entertainment is to unite and illuminate the heart and the mind, to cause each to learn from, and to enhance, the experience of the other. Bad art and entertainment misinform and disunite them. Much too often this movie appeals to the heart at the expense of the mind; at other times it urgently demands of the heart that it treat with contempt the mind's efforts to keep its integrity; at still other times the heart is simply used, on the mind, as a truncheon. I mistrust any work which tries to persuade me—or rather, which assumes that I assume—that there is so much good in nearly all the worst of us that all it needs is a proper chance and example, to take complete control. I mistrust even more deeply the assumption, so comfortably stylish these days, that whether people turn out well or ill depends overwhelmingly on outside circumstances and scarcely if at all on their own moral intelligence and courage.



At its best, which is usually inextricable with its worst, this movie is a very taking sermon about the feasibility of a kind of Christian semi-socialism, a society founded on affection, kindliness, and trust. Its chief mistake or sin—an enormous one—is its refusal to face the fact that evil is intrinsic in each individual. It interests me, by the way, that in representing a twentieth-century American town Frank Capra idealizes so much that seems essentially nineteenth-century. Many small towns are "backward" in that likable way, but I have never seen one so Norman-Rockwellish as all that. Capra's villainous capitalist is a hundred per cent Charles Dickens. His New Capitalist is a blithe, tough, harmless fellow, and cables the hero a huge check, when it is most needed, purely out of the goodness of his heart. Like Stewart, he is obviously the salt of the earth. Some day I hope to meet him.

THE Nation
HOW FREE IS FREE?
June 28, 1952

[June 28, 1952]

10-20-1947
The House Un-American Activities Committee opens an investigation into the alleged Communist infiltration of Hollywood. *The Nation* accuses it of "flouting every American precept of the rights of individuals and doing it in the most cowardly way."

5-23-1953
***The Nation* publishes "The Case Against Smoking."** Written by Dr. Alton Ochsner, it's the first expert article for a general audience linking cigarettes to lung cancer.

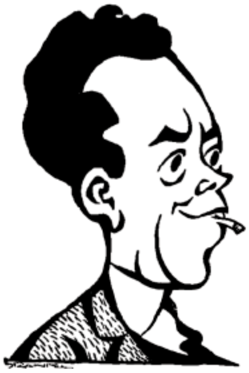
COVER AND ILLUSTRATION: BEN SHAHN

French Existentialism

HANNAH ARENDT

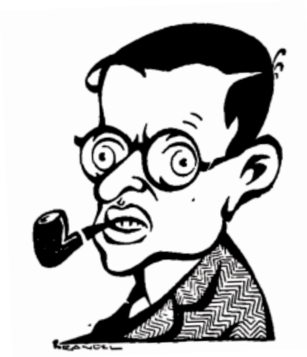
FEBRUARY 23, 1946

A lecture on philosophy provokes a riot, with hundreds crowding in and thousands turned away. Books on philosophical problems preaching no cheap creed and offering no panacea but, on the contrary, so difficult as to require actual thinking sell like detective stories. Plays in which the action is a matter of words, not of plot, and which offer a dialogue of reflections and ideas run for months and are attended by enthusiastic crowds. Analyses of the situation of man in the world, of the fundaments of human relationship, of Being and the Void not only give rise to a new literary movement but also figure as possible guides for a fresh political orientation. Philosophers become newspapermen, playwrights, novelists. They are not members of university faculties but "bohemians" who stay at hotels and live in the cafe—leading a public life to the point of renouncing privacy. Not even success, or so it seems, can turn them into respectable bores.


Camus

This is what is happening in Paris. If the Resistance has not achieved the European revolution, it seems to have brought about, at least in France, a genuine rebellion of the intellectuals, whose docility in relation to modern society was one of the saddest aspects of the sad spectacle of Europe between wars. And the French people, for the time being, appear to consider the arguments of their philosophers more important than the talk and the quarrels of their politicians. The name of the new movement is "Existentialism," and its chief exponents are Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.

It would be a cheap error to mistake this new trend in philosophy and literature for just another fashion of the day because its exponents refuse the respectability of institutions and do not even pretend to that seriousness which regards every achievement as a step in a career. Nor should we be put off by the loud journalistic success with which their work has been accompanied. This success, equivocal as it may be in itself, is nevertheless due to the quality of the work. It is also due to a definite modernity of attitude which does not try to hide the depth of the break in Western tradition. The good thing about Sartre and Camus is that they apparently suffer no longer from nostalgia for the good old days, even though they may know that in an abstract sense those days were actually better than ours. They do not believe in the magic of the old, and they are honest in that they make no compromises whatever.


Sartre

Yet if the revolutionary élan of these writers is not broken by success, if, symbolically speaking, they stick to their hotel rooms and their cafes, the time may come when it will be necessary to point out those aspects of their philosophy which indicate that they are still dangerously involved in old concepts. The nihilistic elements, which are obvious in spite of all protests to the contrary, are not the consequences of new insights but of some very old ideas.

Americans and Their Myths

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

OCTOBER 18, 1947

Everything has been said about the United States. When a careful arrangement of those melting-pot notions—puritanism, realism, optimism, and so on—which we have been told are the keys to the American character is presented to us in Europe, we experience a certain intellectual satisfaction and think that it must be so. But when we walk about New York, on Third Avenue, or Sixth Avenue, or Tenth Avenue, at that evening hour which, for Da Vinci, lends softness to the faces of men, we see the most pathetic visages in the world, uncertain, searching, intent, full of astonished good faith, with appealing eyes, and we know that the most beautiful generalizations are of very little service: they permit us to understand the system but not the people.

The system is an implacable machine which one might call the objective spirit of the United States and which over there they call Americanism—a huge complex of myths, values, recipes, slogans, figures, and rites. It is something outside of the people, something presented to them; the most adroit propaganda does nothing else but present it to them continuously. It is not in them, they are in it; they struggle against it or they accept it, they submit to it or reinvent it, they give themselves up to it or make furious efforts to escape from it; in any case it remains outside them, transcendent, because they are men and it is a thing.

There are the great myths, the myths of happiness, of progress, of liberty, of triumphant maternity—and then there are the Americans. There is this myth of happiness: black-magic slogans warn you to be happy at once; films that "end well" show a life of rosy ease to the exhausted crowds; the language is charged with optimistic and unrestrained expressions—"have a good time," "life is fun," and the like. But there are also these people who, though conventionally happy, suffer from an obscure *malaise*, who are tragic through fear of being so, through that total absence of the tragic in them and around them.

Perhaps nowhere else will you find such a discrepancy between people and myth, between life and the representation of life. An American said to me: "The trouble is that we are all eaten by the fear of being less American than our neighbor." I accept this explanation: it shows that Americanism is not merely a myth that clever propaganda stuffs into people's heads but something every American continually reinvents. It is at one and the same time a great external reality rising up at the entrance to the port of New York across from the Statue of Liberty, and the daily product of anxious liberties. The anguish of the American confronted with Americanism is an ambivalent anguish, as if he were asking, "Am I American enough?" and at the same time, "How can I escape from Americanism?" In America a man's simultaneous answers to these two questions make him what he is, and each man must find his own answers.

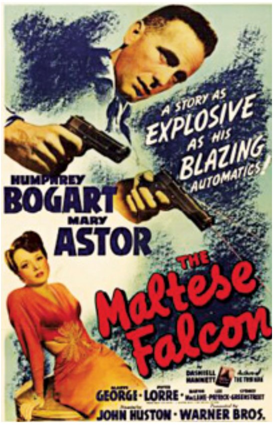
ILLUSTRATIONS: BRANDEL

Parlor Games With Gats

MANNY FARBER

June 4, 1949

Hollywood's fair-haired boy, to the critics, is director John Huston; in terms of falling into the Hollywood mold, Huston is a smooth blend of iconoclast and sheep. If you look closely at his films, what appears to be a familiar story, face, grouping of actors, or tempo has in each case an obscure, outrageous, double-crossing unfamiliarity that is the product of an Eisenstein-lubricated brain.


A STORY AS EXPLOSIVE AS HIS BLAZING AUTOMATICS!
HUMPHREY BOGART
MARY ASTOR
THE Maltese Falcon
GEORGE LORRE
JOHN HUSTON · WARNER BROS.

Though Huston deals with the gangster, detective, adventure thriller that the average fan knows like the palm of his hand, he is Message-Mad, and mixes a savage story with puddin'head righteousness. His characters are humorless and troubled and quite reasonably so, since Huston, like a Puritan judge, is forever calling on them to prove that they can soak up punishment, carry through harrowing tasks, withstand the ugliest taunts. Huston is a crazy man with death: he pockmarks a story with gratuitous deaths, fast deaths, noisy ones, and in idle moments has his characters play parlor games with gats. Though his movies are concerned with grim interpersonal relationships, half of each audience takes them for comedies.

Money—its possession, influence, manufacture, lack—is a star performer in Huston's moral fables and gilds his technique; his irony toward and preoccupation with money indicate a director who is a little bitter at being so rich. His movies will please a Russian audience: half the characters (Americans) are money-mad, directly enriching themselves by counterfeiting, prospecting, blackmail, panhandling.

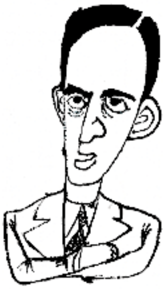
Huston's technique differs from classic Hollywood practice in which the primary image is the fluid landscape shot where terrain and individual are blended together. Huston's art is stage presentation: the scenery is curiously deadened, and the individual has an exaggerated vitality. His characters do everything the hard way—the mastication of a gum-chewing gangster resembles the leg-motion in bicycling. In the traditional film life is viewed from a comfortable vantage-point, one that is so unobtrusive that the audience is seldom conscious of the fact that a camera had anything to do with what is shown. In Huston's you are constantly aware of a vitaminized photographer. Huston breaks a film up into a hundred disparate midget films.

The Eisenstein of the Bogart thriller, he rigidly delimits the subject matter that goes into a frame, by chiaroscuro or by grouping his figures within the square of the screen so that there is nothing else to look at. He is a terror with a camera where there is hardly room for an actor to move an arm: given a small group in close quarters, around a bar, bonfire, table, he will hang on to the event for dear life and show you peculiarities of posture, expression, and anatomy that only the actor's doctor should know. The arty, competent Huston would seem to an old rough-and-ready silent film director like a boy who graduated from Oxford at the age of eight, and painted the Sistine Chapel during his lunch hours.

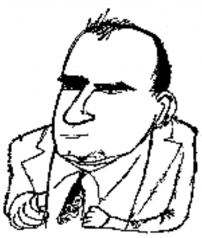
The Witch Hunt and Civil Rights

CAREY McWILLIAMS

June 28, 1952



Roy Cohn



Joseph McCarthy

The past few years have witnessed an anomalous development in the struggle to safeguard human freedoms. Some progress has been noted in the effort to extend civil rights, but serious setbacks have occurred in almost every category of civil liberties.

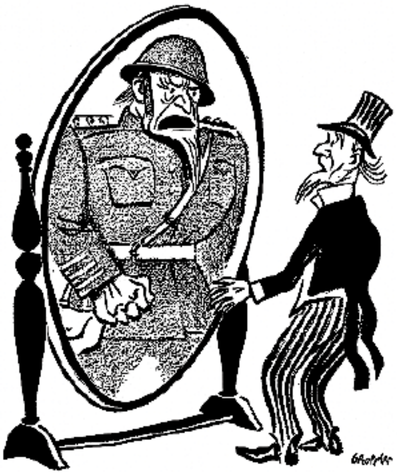
The distinction has some historical basis. Since the passage of the original federal civil-rights act, rights which stem from legislation aimed at preventing discrimination on account of race, creed, or color have been called "civil rights," whereas the basic liberties are those previously sanctioned by the Bill of Rights. Though historically valid, the distinction has been used to create the impression that human rights are adequately protected, when in fact the opposite is true.

Since 1949 it has become increasingly clear that the civil-rights program cannot be enacted as long as the witch hunt goes on. The moment the demand for full civil equality begins to find expression in independent political action, the struggle for civil rights will become one with the struggle to maintain civil liberties. At this point the protagonists of civil rights will either be smeared as Reds or threatened with legal action as disturbers of the peace.

Civil liberties and civil rights are not separable. One cannot be achieved while the other is denied. Indeed, the most important item on the agenda of organizations concerned with civil rights should now be to bring the witch hunt to a speedy end. This is not to say that in the field of civil rights token concessions will not be granted; they may in fact be granted as a means of dividing the forces which if united might terminate the witch hunt. But any concessions granted by the witch hunters will be subject to the implied condition that minority groups continue to talk about civil rights, not civil liberties, and agree to support the cold war.

In short, the witch hunt threatens to retard the movement for both civil rights and civil liberties for a long time unless there is early and widespread realization, particularly among minority groups, of the truth pointed out by Walter White of the N.A.A.C.P. and David Petergorsky of the American Jewish Congress, that "human freedom is indivisible."

ILLUSTRATIONS: BEN SHAHN



Solution in Indo-China: Cease-Fire, Negotiate

BERNARD FALL

MARCH 6, 1954

"What we have here is a sort of *gouvernement crépusculaire*—a twilight government," said the French colonel in charge of the Pacification Bureau in Hanoi. "In our own area we control the cities and major roads from daybreak till nightfall. Thereafter the Vietminh has the country to itself to levy taxes, attack our posts, and execute the 'Vietnamese traitors,' that is, the Nationalists who still profess to believe in victory for our side."

Such is the situation in war-torn Indo-China. After more than seven years of bitter fighting France has spent twice as much on the Indo-China war as it has received under the Marshall Plan for its own rehabilitation, and America has furnished much more military and economic aid—calculated on a per capita basis—than it ever gave to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists.

Politically, the situation looks even more hopeless for the West. France has not succeeded in convincing the Vietnamese that it will make good its promises of full independence. At the same time the Vietnamese Nationalist government, by its accumulating psychological mistakes, has been divorced not only from the mass of the farmers but from its most promising military cadres. As long as the military situation had not too seriously deteriorated, and as long as the Chinese Communists were committed in Korea, the possibility of a political solution of the Indo-China conflict was pushed into the background by everyone concerned. Now, however, the French are obviously eager to stop the fighting in any way possible. There can be no doubt that the United States has already considered what course it would take in the event of the loss of Vietnam. It is certainly not by sheer coincidence that General Donovan, wartime O.S.S. chief, is now ambassador to Thailand.

If a cease-fire could be arranged, the most promising next step would seem to be the establishment of an intermediary government. The West would still have a number of trump cards in Indo-China which the Soviet bloc could hardly match. Massive economic aid might swing the balance, and substitute for the total loss of Indo-China in a creeping war the building up of a neutral regime.

Any solution that accomplishes the neutralization of Indo-China would be more desirable than this hopeless stalemate in the jungle swamps. We need have no illusions about Ho's regime. It is of course Communist-dominated. But so is the U.S.S.R. and its satellites, with whom the United States, and France, maintain normal diplomatic relations. A farsighted policy based on well-administered aid might do more to stem the Communist tide in Southeast Asia than sending a few technicians or a few additional plane-loads of napalm.

ENCOUNTER

Lost on the Street Without Joy

FRANCES FITZGERALD

At the time of his death in 1967, Bernard Fall was the leading authority on the French and American wars in Vietnam. He had written seven books and some 200 articles in fourteen years, including his classic account of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, *Hell in a Very Small Place*. Valued for his deep knowledge and acute analysis, he taught journalists, antiwar intellectuals and thoughtful military officers the political and military realities of Vietnam. No one had more experience with the two wars than he did, or saw them as clearly.

The Nation's editors did well to find Fall in 1954. "Solution in Indo-China," which appeared when he was an unknown graduate student who had just returned from his first trip to Vietnam, must have been one of the first articles he ever published. It concerned a central event in modern Vietnamese history, and Fall was his usual prescient self.

In early March of that year, just a month before the Geneva Conference on Korea and Indochina, Fall described the political and military situation in Vietnam and looked at the possibilities for ending the conflict. He rejected the idea of a permanent partition of Vietnam in favor of establishing a single national government. A Vietminh regime, he predicted, would seek independence and neutrality, as Tito's Yugoslavia had.

Fall's proposal flew in the face of the prevailing US attitude that Ho Chi Minh was nothing more than an agent of international communism. The Geneva Accords, approved by France, Britain, China, the Soviet Union and the Vietminh, allowed for the solution that Fall envisaged by establishing the seventeenth parallel as a temporary demarcation line for the French withdrawal and mandating an election for a national government in 1956. But Secretary of State John Foster Dulles refused to approve the agreement, and the Eisenhower administration immediately began to build up an anticommunist regime in the South. Only after another disastrous war did policy-makers learn that Fall was right: the goal of Ho Chi Minh's revolution had always been independence.

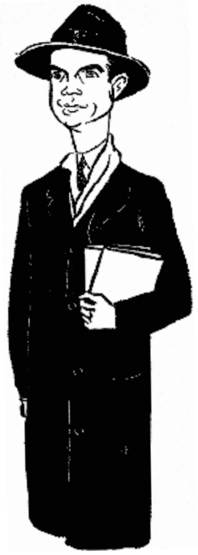
Fall went to Vietnam almost by accident, yet his whole life had prepared him for it. Born of an Austrian Jewish family in

WILLIAM GROPPER

ART ARCHIVE

Alger Hiss

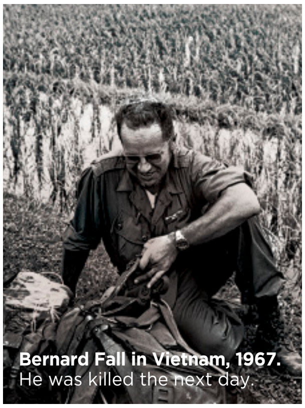
Seligson, February 11, 1950



The guilt or innocence of Alger Hiss, accused of being a Soviet spy but convicted only of perjury, was an enduring concern—even an obsession—with *The Nation* for years.

1926, he emigrated to France with his parents after the Anschluss, and at 16 joined the French Resistance. His father was captured and murdered by the Gestapo, and his mother was sent to Auschwitz. Fall survived to join the First French Army and was wounded as it fought its way into Germany. After a stint as a researcher for an American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, he went to university, first in Paris and then in Munich. In 1951, he accepted a Fulbright scholarship to study political science at Syracuse University. After a professor encouraged him to do research on the Indochina struggle, about which there was little scholarship, he financed a trip with his own small savings and soon found himself involved in what he later called "a bad love affair" with Vietnam.

As a French reserve officer, Fall had special access to the French command and natural sympathy for the French army. Yet he was able to maintain a critical distance. When a commander claimed that the French controlled most of the Red River Delta, Fall studied the village tax rolls and found that most of the villages had not paid taxes to the French-backed government for years. The Vietminh, he estimated, controlled 70 percent of the delta outside the cities. His doctoral dissertation, written after his return to the United States, was likely the first scholarly study of Ho Chi Minh's government.



Bernard Fall in Vietnam, 1967. He was killed the next day.

Fall took a professorship at Howard University, and in 1957 he went to Saigon to conduct fieldwork on administrative reform in the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. Many in Washington respected his expertise, and officials at the International Cooperation Administration, the predecessor to the Agency for International Development, wanted to use it to reform the antiquated colonial structures in Saigon and Phnom Penh. The following spring ICA offered, and Fall accepted, a contract to teach for a year at the Royal School of Administration in Cambodia. Two days after he signed the contract, he gave a lecture at the Association of Asian Studies in New York that *The Nation* published, in part, on May 31, 1958.

In that piece, titled "Will South Vietnam Be Next?", Fall reported on the growing insecurity in the countryside and the economic deterioration exacerbated by the American aid program. By funding imports of commercial goods rather than investing in the local economy, he wrote, the US program was putting people out of work and creating ever-greater dependence on foreign aid. The United States could not afford to neglect the landless farmers and the jobless workers, Fall concluded, because it was they who had made up the shock troops that defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu.

ICA abruptly dropped Fall's contract. He supposed that the South Vietnamese embassy official who attended his lecture had brought pressure on Washington. But in 2011, the National Archives released a telegram that showed the matter had gone up to the highest levels of the State Department. Signed by the director of Southeast Asian affairs and stamped "DULLES," it noted that "Fall has been [a] consistent and vocal critic [of] U.S. policy, and in recent months has made public statements extremely critical [of the US] aid program [in] Vietnam." Clearly, top US officials—if not Dulles himself—had read the *Nation* piece.

Fall became persona non grata in Diem's South Vietnam and never worked for the American government again. But that was not all. Shortly afterward, the FBI began following him and questioning his friends and contacts. J. Edgar Hoover apparently thought he was a French agent.

In 1961, Fall published his major work on the French war, *Street Without Joy*, in which he argued that the nature of the conflict was political rather than simply military and described the trials of the French soldiers in vivid, human terms. Praise for the book appeared in US military journals, and the commanding general at Fort Bragg, who was training the elite Special Forces for counterinsurgency warfare in Vietnam, often invited its author to lecture. Four decades later, the book reappeared on the reading list for officers during the Iraq War.

Endorsements from military men often made antiwar activists uncomfortable with Fall, but by 1962 he had become convinced that the US experiment was over, and that the best thing for the South Vietnamese would be a negotiated peace. FBI surveillance then picked up in earnest. Attorney General Robert Kennedy approved Hoover's request for a tap on Fall's phone and a microphone in his house. FBI agents succeeded in intimidating most of Fall's friends and contacts in the US government. But they finally had to end the surveillance—not just because they found no evidence that he was gathering intelligence for the French, but because too many important people in Washington had begun to consult Fall as the authority on the war.

After the American regular forces entered the war, Fall went to South Vietnam every year, often going out on operations with American troops. In *The Nation* and other publications, he wrote that the United States, with its overwhelming firepower, could not lose the war, but because it had lost the political struggle, it could not win it either. By the end of 1966, he felt strongly that the United States had lost sight of Vietnam itself, and that the war had become a general test of advanced military technology against guerrilla movements—that the proper analogy was not Munich but Spain.

In February 1967, Fall, at the age of 40, was blown up by a land mine on the narrow strip of coastland north of Hue that the French soldiers had christened the "Street Without Joy."

> **"** ***Fortunately we continue to redeem, often after costly delays and protestations, the promises to which we are committed by history and tradition and, we can now add, by current conviction.*** **"**
>
> –Carey McWilliams, on *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954

PHOTO: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Day After Tomorrow: Why Science Fiction?

RAY BRADBURY

MAY 2, 1953

It is both exciting and disconcerting for a writer to discover that man's machines are symbols of his own most secret cravings and desires, extra hands put out to touch and reinterpret the world. The machines themselves are empty gloves. The hand is always the hand of man, and the hand of man can be good or evil, while the gloves themselves remain amoral.

The problem of good and evil fascinates. Our atomic knowledge destroys cancer or men. Our airplanes carry passengers or jellied gasoline bombs. The human choice is there. Before us today we see the aluminum and steel and uranium chess pieces which the interested science-fiction writer can hope to move about, trying to guess how man will play out the game.

This, I think, should answer why I have more often than not written stories which, for a convenient label, are called science fiction. It is, after all, the fiction of ideas, the fiction where philosophy can be tinkered with, torn apart, and put back together again, it is the fiction of sociology and psychology and history compounded and squared by time. It is the fiction where you may set up and knock down your own political and religious and moral states. Simply by showing your real characters living and dying against your fresh background, the reader can guess an entire and different world, can feel it come alive through an osmotic literary process which is often exceptionally subtle.

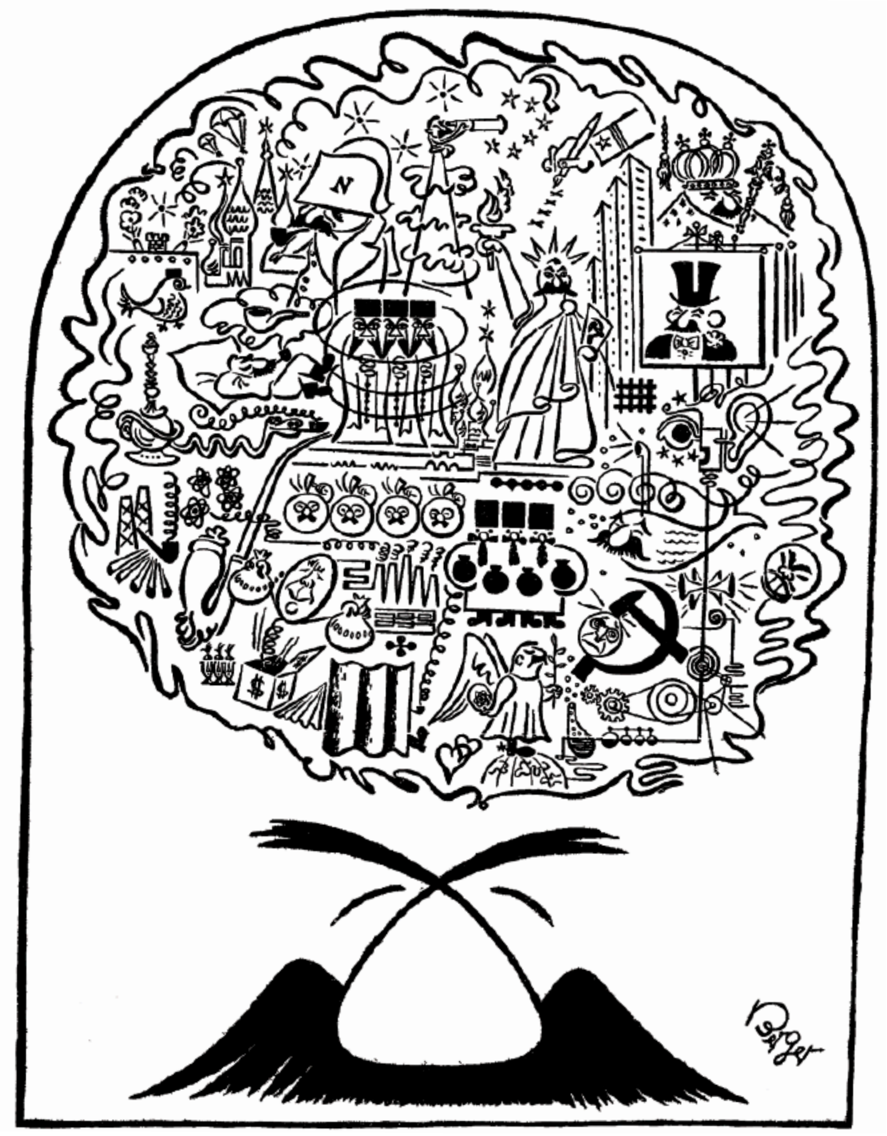
Would you like to know how a Communist government might run the United States? A fascist clique? A government of matriarchs? Novels exist covering all these subjects. Why travel to the Moon or Mars if we only continue our wars there with Russia or Britain or Africa? Why build rockets at all? For fun? For adventure? Or is this the same process which sends the salmon back upstream year after year to spawn and die—a subliminal urge in mankind to spread, in self-preservation, to the stars? Are we then secretly fearful that one day the sun might freeze and the earth grow cold or the sun explode in a terrific thermal cataclysm and burn down our house of cards? And is all this space-travel talk nothing more than the human race itself seeing to it that it survives when survival means getting off a single, unstable planet and seeding space to its farthest boundaries, where no natural catastrophe, no congealing of sun or passing comet, can destroy man?

Certainly I have often wished that a new name might be applied to this field, since the old name has grown shopworn in the service of bug-eyed monsters and half-naked space women. But there seems to be no way to avoid that, and new writers coming into the field will have to carry the burden of the old label until someone provides a better one, in this land where everything must *absolutely* have a label.

ART ARCHIVE

Stalin's Mind

Oscar Berger, June 11, 1949



[May 25, 1957]

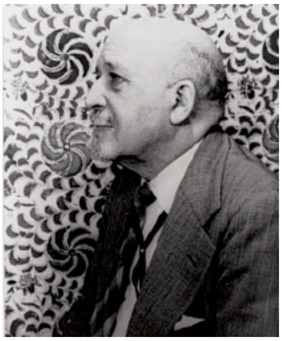
10-18-1958 ***The Nation* publishes one of the first critical investigations of the FBI.** In an internal memo, J. Edgar Hoover calls the special issue "planned literary garbage" and orders an investigation of its author, Fred Cook. The FBI opened a file on *The Nation* in 1921.

2-7-1964 **The Beatles arrive in the United States.** *The Nation* calls them "derivative, a deliberate imitation of an American genre," and describes Beatlemania as "manna for dull minds."

I Won't Vote

W.E.B. DU BOIS

OCTOBER 20, 1956



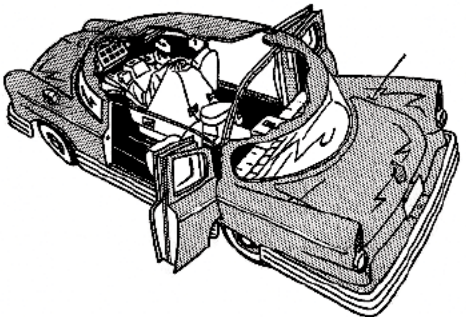
I shall not go to the polls. I believe that democracy has so far disappeared in the United States that no "two evils" exist. There is but one evil party with two names, and it will be elected despite all I can do or say. There is no third party. On the ballot in a few states, a "Socialist" Party will appear. Few will hear its appeal because it will have almost no opportunity to take part in the campaign and explain its platform. If a voter organizes or advocates a real third-party movement, he may be accused of seeking to overthrow this government by "force and violence." Anything he advocates by way of significant reform will be called "Communist" and will of necessity be Communist in the sense that it must advocate such things as government ownership of the means of production; government in business; the limitation of private profit; social medicine, government housing and federal aid to education; the total abolition of race bias; and the welfare state. These things are on every Communist program; these things are the aim of socialism. Any American who advocates them today, no matter how sincerely, stands in danger of losing his job, surrendering his social status and perhaps landing in jail.

The present Administration is carrying on the greatest preparation for war in the history of mankind. [The Democratic challenger] promises to maintain or increase this effort. The weight of our taxation is unbearable and rests mainly and deliberately on the poor. This Administration is dominated and directed by wealth and for the accumulation of wealth. It runs smoothly like a well-organized industry because industry runs it for the benefit of industry. Corporate wealth profits as never before. We turn over the national resources to private profit and have few funds left for education, health or housing. Our crime, especially juvenile crime, is increasing. Its increase is perfectly logical; for a generation we have been teaching our youth to kill, destroy, steal and rape in war; what can we expect in peace? It costs three times his salary to elect a Senator and many millions to elect a President. This money comes from the very corporations which today are the government. This in a real democracy would be enough to turn the party responsible out of power. Yet this we cannot do.

I will be no party to it and that will make little difference. You will bravely march to the polls, and that also will make no difference. Democracy is dead in the United States. Yet there is still nothing to replace real democracy. Drop the chains, then, that bind our brains. Drive the money-changers from the seats of the Cabinet and the halls of Congress. Call back some faint spirit of Jefferson and Lincoln, and when again we can hold a fair election on real issues, let's vote, and not till then. Is this impossible? Then democracy in America is impossible.

The *Safe* Car You Can't Buy

RALPH NADER



Maximum protection: A sketch of the Cornell-Liberty Safety Car

APRIL 11, 1959

It is clear that Detroit today is designing automobiles for style, cost, performance and calculated obsolescence, but not for safety. Doors that fly open on impact, inadequately secured seats, the sharp-edged rearview mirror, pointed knobs on instrument panel and doors, flying glass, the overhead structure—all illustrate the lethal potential of poor design. A sudden deceleration turns a steering wheel or a sharp-edged dashboard into a bone-and chest-crushing agent. Penetration of the shatterproof windshield can chisel one's head into fractions. The apparently harmless glove-compartment door has been known to unlatch under impact and guillotine a child. Automobiles are so designed as to be dangerous at any speed.

Our preoccupation has been with the cause of accidents seen in terms of the driver and not with the instruments that produce the injuries. Erratic driving will always be characteristic of the traffic scene; exhortation and stricter law enforcement have at best a limited effect. Much more significant for saving life is the application of engineering remedies to minimize the lethal effects of human error by designing the automobile so as to afford maximum protection to occupants in the event of a collision. In a word, the job is to make accidents safe.

The task of publicizing the relation between automotive design and highway casualties is fraught with difficulties. The press, radio and television are not likely to undertake this task in terms of industry responsibility when millions in

PHOTO: CARL VAN VECHTEN

advertising dollars are being poured into their coffers. Private researchers are reluctant to stray from their scholarly and experimental pursuits, especially when cordial relations with the industry are necessary for the continuation of their projects. The industry's policy is bearing fruit; most investigators keep their private disgust with the industry's immobility from seeping into the public limelight. They consider themselves fact-finders and leave the value judgments to others. This adherence to a rigid division of labor provides a convenient rationalization for the widespread amorality among our scholarly elite, who appear insensitive to the increased responsibility as citizens which their superior knowledge should require them to shoulder.

Even if all the facts, laid before the public, did not increase consumer demand for safety design (which is unlikely), the manufacturers should not be relieved of their responsibility. Innumerable precedents show that the consumer must be protected from his own indiscretion and vanity. Dangerous drugs cannot be dispensed without a licensed physician's prescription; meat must pass federal inspection before distribution; railroads and other interstate carriers are required to meet safety standards regarding their equipment.

Perhaps the best summation lies in a physician's comment on the car manufacturer's design policy: "Translated into medicine," he writes, "it would be comparable to withholding known methods of life-saving value."

PRESIDENT TRUMAN- Free THE HOLLYWOOD TEN
EAST GATES
THE NATION
Dalton Trumbo
BLACKLIST = BLACK MARKET

Dalton Trumbo (left) and John Howard Lawson, two of the Hollywood Ten, address a crowd of supporters before leaving for prison in 1950 after being convicted of contempt of Congress.

MARTY LEDERHANDLER / AP

Blacklist = Black Market

DALTON TRUMBO

MAY 4, 1957

As the year 1957 lurches toward its mid-point, Hollywood finds itself celebrating, willingly or unwillingly, the tenth anniversary of a blacklist which began in 1947. Despite assurances that ten heads would appease the gods, the guillotine has since claimed some 250 artists and technicians.

A blacklist is an illegal instrument of terror which can exist only by sufferance of and connivance with the federal government. The Hollywood blacklist is but part of an immensely greater official blacklist—barring its victims from work at home and denying them passage abroad—which mocks our government in all its relations with civilized powers that neither tolerate nor understand such repression. The shock of the blacklist produces psychic disorders among sensitive persons, from which result broken homes, desolate children, premature deaths and sometimes suicide.

It is not alone the loss of income or of property that hurts: the more terrible wound is the loss of a profession to which one's entire life has been dedicated. A director must have the facilities of a studio: denied them, he sells real estate. A violinist must appear in person for the concert: barred from admittance, he becomes a milkman and practices six hours a day against the unrevealed time when his music once more may be heard. The actor's physical personality, which is his greatest asset, becomes his supreme curse under the blacklist; he must be seen, and when the sight of him is prohibited he becomes a carpenter, an insurance salesman, a barber.

A writer is more fortunate. Give him nothing more than paper, a pencil and a nice clean cell, and he's in business. Dante, Cervantes, Rousseau, Voltaire, Ben Jonson, Milton, Defoe, Bunyan, Hugo, Zola and a score of others have long since proved that in jail or out, writing under their own names or someone else's or a pseudonym or anonymously, writers will write; and that having written, they will find an audience. Only fools with no knowledge of history and bureaucrats with no knowledge of literature are stupid enough to think otherwise.

And so it chanced in Hollywood that each blacklisted writer, after swiftly describing that long parabola from the heart of the motion-picture industry to a small house in a low-rent district, picked himself up, dusted his trousers, anointed his abrasions, looked around for a ream of clean white paper and something to deface it with, and began to write. Through secret channels, and by means so cunning they may never be revealed, what he wrote was passed along until finally it appeared on a producer's desk, and the producer looked upon it and found it good, and monies were paid, and the writer's children began contentedly to eat. Thus the black market.

There may come a time in this country when blacklists turn popular, and inquisitors are invited to dinner, and mothers at bedtime read to their children the story of the good informer. But just now the current runs in an opposite direction.

All things, as the man said, change.

Finishing School for Pickets

HOWARD ZINN

AUGUST 6, 1960

One afternoon some weeks ago, with the dogwood on the Spelman College campus newly bloomed and the grass close-cropped and fragrant, an attractive, tawny-skinned girl crossed the lawn to her dormitory to put a notice on the bulletin board. It read: Young Ladies Who Can Picket Please Sign Below.

The notice revealed, in its own quaint language, that within the dramatic revolt of Negro college students in the South today another phenomenon has been developing. This is the upsurge of the young, educated Negro woman against the generations-old advice of her elders: be nice, be well-mannered and ladylike, don't speak loudly, and don't get into trouble. On the campus of the nation's leading college for Negro young women—pious, sedate, encrusted with the traditions of gentility and moderation—these exhortations, for the first time, are being firmly rejected.

Spelman College girls are still "nice," but not enough to keep them from walking up and down, carrying picket signs, in front of supermarkets in the heart of Atlanta. They are well-mannered, but this is somewhat tempered by a recent declaration that they will use every method short of violence to end segregation. As for staying out of trouble, they were doing fine until this spring, when fourteen of them were arrested and jailed by Atlanta police. The staid New England women missionaries who helped found Spelman College back in the 1880s would probably be distressed at this turn of events, and present-day conservatives in the administration and faculty are rather upset. But respectability is no longer respectable among young Negro women attending college today.

Howard Zinn signs his first book, *LaGuardia in Congress*, for his Spelman College students in 1960.

"You can always tell a Spelman girl," alumni and friends of the college have boasted for years. The "Spelman girl" walked gracefully, talked properly, went to church every Sunday, poured tea elegantly and had all the attributes of the product of a fine finishing school. If intellect and talent and social consciousness happened to develop also, they were, to an alarming extent, byproducts.

This is changing. It would be an exaggeration to say: "You can always tell a Spelman girl—she's under arrest." But the statement has a measure of truth.

> "In relation to the United States, South Vietnam looks more and more like Algeria in relation to France during the seven-year war. The dirty war may not be lost by the United States, but neither will it be won. At the expense of mounting American casualties, it will drag on."
>
> –Editorial, July 28, 1962

ENCOUNTER

Learning Insubordination

PAULA J. GIDDINGS

In the current age of "lean-in" feminism at one end of the spectrum and an "anti-respectability" discourse at the other, the late Howard Zinn's essay reminds us of an earlier meaning of women's liberation.

Zinn was of Russian-Jewish heritage, an influential historian and, in 1960, a beloved professor at Spelman College, the historically black women's institution in the then-segregated city of Atlanta. The attribution of "finishing school" in the title was well-earned: Spelman girls, whose acceptance letters included requests to bring white gloves and girdles with them to campus, were molded to honor the virtues of "true-womanhood": piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness.

Nevertheless, by 1960, Zinn's students had morphed from "nice, well-mannered and ladylike" paragons of politesse to determined demonstrators who picketed, organized sit-ins, and were sometimes arrested and jailed for their efforts. "Respectability is no longer respectable among young Negro women attending college today," Zinn concluded.

These young girls were born in the 1940s, and whatever the background of their parents (who might be sharecroppers, teachers or doctors), their generation was destined to belong to a new stratum of Americans: the "Black Bourgeoisie," as the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier called it. An economic class that was literally wedged in the "middle" between a small black elite and the black masses, this group emerged in no small part because of the unprecedented number of educated women who, historically excluded from pink-collar positions, now had access not only to the elite professions, but to mainstream administrative, clerical and civil-service jobs.

For black women, burdened by stereotypes of hypersexuality, this development meant more than a triumph of simple social mobility. With education, more girls could now escape the domestic and personal service work that subjected them to the sexual exploitation of employers and others. To be able to avoid such a soul-killing future was the dream of generations of mothers for their daughters—one that I often heard from my own grandmother, who had migrated north so that my mother could be the first in the family to attain a college education. The stakes in taking advantage of these newer opportunities were indeed high and brimmed with profound meaning and emotion.

In 1960, Spelman, like other black schools—including those that educated

COURTESY OF THE SPELMAN COLLEGE ARCHIVES

and employed the great civil-rights lawyers and intellectuals of the period—had little tolerance for the student activities that Zinn encouraged and sometimes led. It was one thing to support integration and equality, and quite another to sanction a sit-in at the segregated library or enrage powerful politicians by occupying the whites-only visiting section of the Georgia Legislature. Although these acts were not as dramatic as the more violent encounters that we are familiar with, these young women were also risking their lives. Expulsion, the loss of a scholarship or a work-study opportunity, could mean an end to the hopes of a relatively secure—and protected—future.

Nevertheless, this was the Spelman generation that included students like Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, a former debutante who understood that the long-term future of others was more important than her own immediate well-being. She dropped out of college to join the Freedom Rides; became a leader of the "Jail, No Bail" movement; and was the first woman to head the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the premier youth organization.

Feminists today might consider Zinn's insight that his "nice, well-mannered and ladylike" students did not so much abandon respectability as redefine it. They recognized a moment when virtue required acting out, not leaning in, and when the corrective for stifling mores were not displays of unfettered individual behavior that reinforced dangerous stereotypes.

Former Spelman students Alice Walker, the Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist, and Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, credit Zinn as being key to their own activist transformations. The kind of history he wrote and taught intellectualized traditions of black resistance and, as Edelman recalled, encouraged them "to think outside the box and to question rather than accept conventional wisdom." For Walker, despite her perennial fear of losing a needed scholarship, the fact that Zinn not only supported but participated in student demonstrations encouraged her to "carry on" despite the risk.

The professor was also taking a risk, and in 1963 he was fired from Spelman for insubordination. "I plead guilty," he responded with pride, and in the end both students and teacher were better for the experience. In an interview, Zinn once said that his years at Spelman were "probably the most interesting, exciting, most educational years for me. I learned more from my students than my students learned from me."

Without Dogma

HAROLD CLURMAN

OCTOBER 12, 1964

After seeing *Fiddler on the Roof* numerous members of the audience confessed (or proclaimed) that they shed tears of compassion and gratitude; others have asserted that their hearts swelled in elation, while still others were convulsed with laughter. My own reception of the show was cool.

I too found it endearing. Yet the text lacked the full savor of its sources; the music simply followed a pattern of suitable folk melodies without adding, or being equal, to them. Then, too, were not those critics right, in the press and the public, who maintained there was a Broadway taint in the mixture?

Yet the longer I reflected, the greater grew my regard for the show! The steadier my effort to arrive at a true appraisal of my feelings, the more clearly I realized that the general audience reaction was justified. By a too meticulous weighing and sifting of each of the performance's components one loses sight of the whole.

Zero Mostel (center), who played Tevye, with members of the *Fiddler on the Roof* cast after the play's New York City premiere on September 22, 1964

PHOTO: AP

The heart of the show's significance must be sought in its effect on the audience. That effect comes close, within the facile laughter, the snug appreciation of an anticipated showmanship, to something religious. To understand this one must turn to the play's original material. The essence of Sholom Aleichem's work is in a very special sense *moral*. It is the distillation of a humane sweetness from a context of sorrow. It represents the unforced emergence of a real joy and a true sanctification from the soil of life's workaday worries and pleasures. Although this blessed acceptance of the most commonplace facts of living appears casual and unconscious in Sholom Aleichem, it is based on what, in the first and indeed the best of the play's numbers, is called "Tradition."

This tradition, which might superficially be taken to comprise little more than a set of obsolete habits, customs and pietistic prescriptions, is in fact the embodiment of profound culture. A people is not cultured primarily through the acquisition or even the making of works of art; it is cultured when values rooted in biologically and spiritually sound human impulses, having been codified, become the apparently instinctive and inevitable mode of its daily and hourly conduct. Sholom Aleichem's characters are a concentrate of man's belief in living which does not exclude inevitable bewilderment and questioning of life's hardship and brutal confusion.

Is it any wonder, then, that an audience, living in one of the most heartless cities of the world at a time of conformity to the mechanics of production, an audience without much relation to any tradition beyond that expressed through lip service to epithets divested of living experience, an audience progressively more deprived of the warmth of personal contact and the example of dignified companionship, should weep thankfully and laugh in acclamation at these images of a good life lived by good people? In *Fiddler on the Roof* this audience finds a sense of what "togetherness" might signify. Without the cold breath of any dogma or didactics, it gets a whiff of fellow feeling for the unfortunate and the persecuted. It is a sentiment that acts as a kind of purification.

Is there too much "show biz" in *Fiddler on the Roof*? Undoubtedly. The makers and players of *Fiddler on the Roof* are not of Kiev, 1905, nor do they live (even in memory) a life remotely akin to that of Tevye the Dairyman, his family and his friends, or of the author who begat them. The producers of *Fiddler on the Roof* are Broadway—as is the audience—and, in this instance, perhaps the best of it.

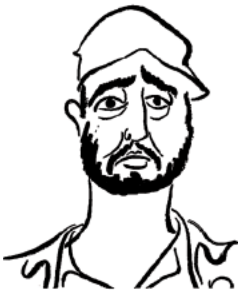
Cuba's Invasion Jitters

CARLETON BEALS

NOVEMBER 12, 1960

Castro's revolutionary government knows that Washington has declared implacable economic warfare on Cuba, that its goal is the overthrow of Fidel Castro whatever the cost. Some months ago, Castro's officials got hold of copies of placards secretly printed by U.S. Ambassador Philip Bonsal. This is the house of an American citizen, the placards read, and the text went on to ask that both citizens and property be respected *not by the government of Cuba, but by whoever might have authority*. Now Washington has suggested that Americans get out of Cuba. In Cuba, this was taken to be the first step in an armed intervention scheme. It was also so interpreted by every ex-Batista assassin and exiled plotter.

Even if an attack occurred, the Cubans may be wrong in believing that immediate armed intervention would follow. A state of quasi-belligerency would permit the United States to blockade the island and starve the Cuban people into submission. There are indications that a clique in Washington wishes to set up such a blockade and seize all shipments from iron curtain countries. Such a course could bring about armed clashes with the Soviets, who might attempt to protect their shipping with warships and submarines.



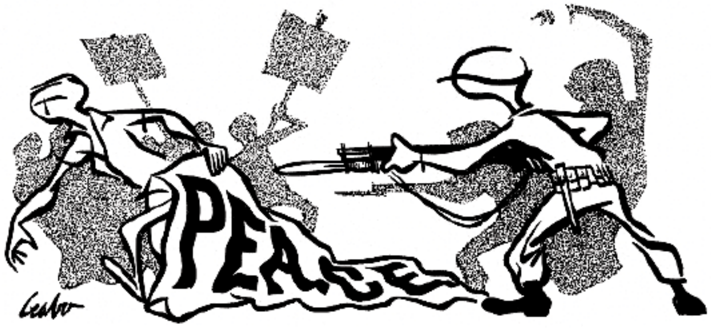
Besides threatening world conflict, our Cuban policy has broken the New World front. Each hour that our punitive blows hit Cuba, we lose support from the people of Latin America; and even the support of "loyal" governments grows shaky.

Latin American ill-feeling toward the United States has been building up steadily, especially since the Washington-engineered overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala. The resentment flaring today at our Cuban policy needs no Castro propaganda to feed it.

The Presidential candidates quibble about prestige. Prestige with whom? Franco's Spain? Duvalier's Haiti? Somoza's Nicaragua? Our cold war against Castro is losing us the battle for all the neutral and independent new countries of the world. Cuba may be our last chance to prove that we intend something better than a Hungary, a Cyprus, an Algeria; Cuba could be our last chance to save face, and also prestige, with the people of Latin America. Unhappily, the signs are that we intend to proceed on our present path of folly.

The Indignant Generation

JESSICA MITFORD



MAY 27, 1961

"The employers will love this generation, they are not going to press many grievances.... They are going to be easy to handle. There aren't going to be any riots." Buried somewhere in a 1959 publication of the American Council on Education reporting a conference on the college student, this prophecy by Clark Kerr, President of the University of California, today has a curiously outdated ring. A few scattered signposts on a number of campuses, including his own, might even then have suggested a qualification of this flat judgment; in any event, shortly before Commencement of the following year, Bay Area newspapers exploded with the news, STUDENTS RIOT AT HOUSE UN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE HEARING. Of the fourteen hospitalized and sixty-odd arrested that day and the thousands who subsequently demonstrated against the committee, the majority were from the Berkeley campus.

In the welter of charges and countercharges, praise and censure that followed, one fact emerged: the current crop of students had gone far to shake the label of apathy and conformity that had stuck through the fifties.

In 1950, the year of the University of California loyalty oath, 5,000 undergraduate signatures were obtained in support of the non-signing professors. The head of steam that was generated over this issue was dissipated not so much by "student apathy" as by the capitulation of their elders. A professor vowed to a meeting of students that never, as long as he lived, would he sign the despicable oath—or any similar oath; the following week he meekly threw in the sponge and signed. Leonard Wolf of San Francisco State College, who was an undergraduate at the time, recalls: "The university suffered generally from a clobbered feeling. The apathy came down from above. As somebody said of the faculty and students of those days, 'It was a case of the bland leading the bland.'"

Students today are not so much *political* as *moral*. They are *for* the simple, liberal issues—free speech, civil rights, ending the nuclear threat. They intend to provide their own leadership, and they look with jaundiced eye on most adult organizations: political parties, which they see as riddled with opportunism; the labor movement, which they consider badly compromised; the remnants of left-wing organizations, which they consider hide-bound, restrictive of thought, and prone to pat solutions.

Their mood is one of indignation and muscle flexing. There is a desire to become re-connected with society and to play an influential part in shaping the future of the world. It is unlikely that those students who have espoused new causes, and have begun to taste the sweet fruits of success in their efforts, will subside into silence.

ILLUSTRATION: TOP, OSCAR BERGER

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FIERCE URGENCIES

From the way we were then to the way we live now

A Sense of Obligation

Marilynne Robinson on religion, history, language and the importance of moral scrutiny.

MARILYNNE ROBINSON IS ONE OF THE FINEST NOVELISTS writing in America today. Her book *Housekeeping* (1980) received the PEN/Hemingway Award for debut fiction. *Gilead* (2004) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, while *Home* (2008) received the Orange Prize for Fiction. On October 17, 2014, Robinson and the staff of *The Nation* had a conversation about her work, including her new novel *Lila*. A full recording can be found at TheNation.com/robinson-interview. What follows are edited excerpts.

—JOHN PALATTELLA

Politics figures in your novels, but the language of politics does not.
It's hard to use modern versions of earlier language with precision. Also, there are words that trigger conditioned response. If you use a certain word, people think they know a great deal about what you mean, so what you want to do is avoid the word and say what you mean. I'm as careful as I can be to avoid language that seems to me can't be refreshed, that in a certain sense has to be evaded.

Might you give an example?
There are sorts of words that, off the top of my head, I specifically rankle at. One of them is "Calvinist." One of them is "Midwest." The word itself implies that everything that needs to be known *is* known. You have to break these things open and look at what they actually are.

What is the proper role of religion in the public sphere?
I don't think it's realistic to think that they can be separated. People use political standards to judge religion, and they use religious standards to judge politics. I think that so long as religion encourages generosity, and so long as it encourages a sense of obligation to the culture, to one another, that's very good—and it doesn't matter which religious basis produces that.

We have lived through a period when we can see religion used very harmfully in society, which is of course not unusual in human history, either. Perhaps it's typical, because history is kind of a mess. The thing that I think it is important to remember is that every question is always real. People can't be passively religious. They have to be critical of what is being presented to them as religion. They can't be passively liberal. They have to think about the consequences of what they are assuming to be liberal values. Human existence is so complex and so volatile that there is never any fixed solution. There is never any fixed understanding. Everything requires moral scrutiny over again, always.

BRIAN RAY / AP

One of the things that made me so interested in abolitionism and the civil-rights movement is that abolitionism was so largely forgotten that the civil-rights movement had to begin from virtually zero. I knew a woman who lived in Michigan who wrote her dissertation on a town named Covert, Michigan. It was called Deerfield because it was settled by New Englanders, but there were so many Deerfields that they changed it to Covert. It was a completely integrated community, from just after the Civil War. They rejected her thesis on the grounds that this could not have happened.

It's not only that people have no history, it's that they actively erase history that doesn't fit their assumptions. And when you erase that kind of history, it's like some wild innovation going on when communities are integrated. We have examples in our own history that could tell us what is possible, fruitful…

John Brown has a brief cameo in *Gilead*. What does Brown mean to you politically and religiously, and what do you think he should mean to society now?
I think that he had an intolerably sharp sense of an intolerably grave crime, and felt very much alone with it, except for his own sons. He thought that he could trigger a revolution with Harper's Ferry. People act as if he were a violent man. He probably initiated less direct violence than most major slaveholders did, and there were a lot of them. People act as if there was peace before John Brown, but there was simply a war against the unarmed before John Brown. He could not be indifferent. And maybe it drove him a little crazy. I don't know. I'm not in a position to judge him.

If you were in Missouri, there were factions there. There were the John Brown people, and then there were the Jesse James people. Now, Jesse James killed a lot more people in a much more horrible fashion than John Brown did. Jesse James was a folk hero. John Brown is some sort of blight on the history. It makes no sense. Jesse James rode around with human scalps hanging from his saddle. He was trying to carry out a one-man guerrilla war against the North. If Jesse James and John Brown had anything like the same historical reputation, then I would be willing to make small concessions toward the idea that John Brown is justly treated. Given the absolute obvious distortion that is apparent when you compare the two, you have to say John Brown has been pilloried. If he went to excesses in a good cause, Jesse James went to far greater excesses in a very bad cause. And who's the villain? Who's the folk hero? **150th**

The Roads Not Taken

The impact of Cold War anticommunism on our national life has been so profound that we no longer recognize how much we've lost.

VICTOR NAVASKY

More than once, when I've been introduced to someone as the former longtime editor of *The Nation*, that person has asked me: "Did you found the magazine?"

And more than once, I have resisted the temptation to denounce the questioner.

I am old (82 last July), but not *that* old. However, the truth is that when, in the late 1970s, I had the chance to become *The Nation*'s editor, I said yes largely because of *The Nation*'s long and noble history.

Even though I grew up in a home where *The Nation* (along with *The New Republic*) arrived weekly, my parents found it hard to understand why I would give up what looked like a promising career at *The New York Times* (where I worked as an editor on the Sunday magazine).

I had taken a leave from the *Times* in the early 1970s to write *Naming Names*, the story of the Hollywood blacklist, which focused on the role of the informer during the so-called phenomenon of McCarthyism. I say "so-called" because the anticommunist hysteria that was its signature began before Senator Joseph McCarthy arrived on the scene and persisted long after he drowned in alcohol. (The historian Ellen Schrecker tells us that knowing what we know now, we should probably call it "Hooverism," after J. Edgar, who did so much behind and in front of the scenes to promote the anticommunist hysteria.)

In the course of my research, I read through all the magazines and journals of the period, and I came to admire *The Nation*'s coverage more than any other's. I also got to read, interview and know *The Nation*'s editor during those years, the late, great and wise Carey McWilliams, who gave a parade of informed and eloquent writers capacious space to document the paranoia of the period, not least among them the lawyer-historian Frank Donner, who so accurately and definitively reported in 1961:

> The obsession with anti-Communism....became a routine feature of our lives. Witness the sedition prosecutions under the Smith Act, the intimidations of the FBI, the rash of loyalty oaths, the security-screening apparatus which blankets American industry, the emergence of the informer as hero, the wave of deportation and denaturalization proceedings against the foreign-born, the restrictions on the right to travel, the manifold attacks on organizations and on the freedom of association, and the congressional witch hunts.

But since, as any reader of *The Nation* will attest, the evils and grotesque excesses of the anticommunist crusade are an old and oft-told story, why bother to bring them up yet again now?

Partly it's because of a personal experience I recently had involving one of McCarthyism's lesser-known victims, Jack O'Dell, now in his 90s, which I'll tell you about in a minute. (We also have an article by O'Dell himself on page 188 of this issue.) But mostly it's because of the impact of McCarthyism/Hooverism on the rest of us. That impact lives on to this day, despite the end of the Cold War that gave rise to it.

The evils and grotesque excesses of the anticommunist crusade are an old and oft-told story, so why bother to bring them up yet again?

Let me explain. After Robert Kennedy was killed during his presidential campaign in 1968, I asked Burke Marshall, who had served as head of the Civil Rights Division in Kennedy's Justice Department, if I could go through his files for a book I was writing on RFK's tenure as attorney general. Marshall said I could but that it wouldn't be of much value, since the Kennedys put little on paper and did everything by word of mouth—and indeed, that turned out to be mostly the case. But one weekend, while the Marshalls were vacationing in the Caribbean, I got snowed in at their place in Bedford Hills, New York—and somewhere around 2:30 in the morning, while going through the papers stored in their attic, I came across a sealed file.

During the campaign, Kennedy had been asked on more than one occasion whether he had authorized the wiretapping of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his answer was always the same: he couldn't discuss individual wiretaps—that information was classified—but he could assure his interrogator that he never authorized any wiretaps except in the area of national security. In the sealed file were a series of memorandums, the first from Hoover asking for permission to tap King's phone because there were two communists ("planted," Hoover wrote) in his camp—a New York lawyer named Stanley Levison, and an African-American, Jack O'Dell—and Hoover wanted to see whether they were trying to influence Dr. King and his movement on behalf of the Soviet Union.

Other memorandums made it clear that the president, the attorney general, Burke Marshall and others—all buying into the prevailing anticommunist assumptions of the day—pressured King to get rid of these two alleged communists, lest their presence be used to smear him and his movement, and compromise the possible passage of civil-rights legislation that was working its way through Congress. I eventually found Levison, who denied party membership, but never found O'Dell; then I wrote it up, and *The Atlantic Monthly* put the story of the wiretapping of Martin Luther King on its cover.

Forty-odd years later, O'Dell, now living in Vancouver, showed up on *The Nation*'s annual fund-raising cruise, and I got to ask him the $64,000 question: "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" His answer: "Of course I was. They were the only people doing anything about Jim Crow, lynching, the poll tax." Asked whether he had any reservations about Stalin, the purge trials and all the rest, he said that he didn't join the party because of Stalin and he didn't leave the party because of Stalin. He quit because he thought that civil rights would come before socialism came, and he wanted to be part of the movement to make that happen.

In 1956, Jack O'Dell was subpoenaed to appear before Senator James Eastland's Internal Security Subcommittee, the intersection of the red scare and white supremacy.

AP

Back in the 1950s, as the sociologist Matthew Nichter put it, communism and socialism, in the minds of most Americans, "were roughly on a par with cannibalism and satanism." But listening to O'Dell now, it occurred to me for the first time what we as a country and a culture had lost by disqualifying this energetic, articulate, charismatic and wise man from making his case in his own name and voice.

And I began to consider how stigmatizing people with the red brush had deprived the rest of us of interaction with people whose ideas might have not merely deepened and clarified the national and international conversation, but whose advocacy, intelligence, passion and information might have brought us to an improved understanding of the political and cultural situation, and perhaps even have transformed it.

I began to wonder what we had lost by not permitting O'Dell (and other communists and former communists who were not willing to renounce their past) to publicly participate in our politics.

Historical counterfactuals never "prove" anything, but before I mention other ways the consequences of our anticommunist obsession continue to bedevil us, indulge me while I cite but one example of how things might have been different had Jack O'Dell and his ideas been accorded the respect, attention, and presumption of possibility accorded members of the establishment and mainstream politicos. Consider his argument that what became the Marshall Plan should have been carried out under the auspices of the United Nations—dismissed at the time as a recycling of the party line.

O'Dell favored using the United Nations to supply aid and relief to rebuild Europe after World War II rather than the Marshall Plan, which he saw, rightly or wrongly, as an agency of US imperialism. Henry Wallace had incorporated the idea in his presidential campaign, and it was included in the Progressive Party's platform. O'Dell believed that Wallace's call for "the century of the common man" was the best answer to magazine magnate Henry Luce's claim that this was "the American century." Many may not agree with O'Dell's analysis that the Marshall Plan was capitalism's way of protecting oil and other business interests. But for myself, when I read about how hundreds of men, women and children are being killed in Syria and slaughtered in Libya but we can't do anything about it for fear of getting involved in "another Iraq" or "another Afghanistan," I can't help wondering: Isn't that what the UN was supposed to be for?

Had O'Dell's position prevailed, and had we built up the United Nations as part of a general effort to honor the ideal of an international agency, would the UN be in a better place—not to mention the world? We can't know the answer to that question, but if the UN is indeed our last, best hope for addressing the staggering array of global problems that confront the planet, it's an important one to ask.

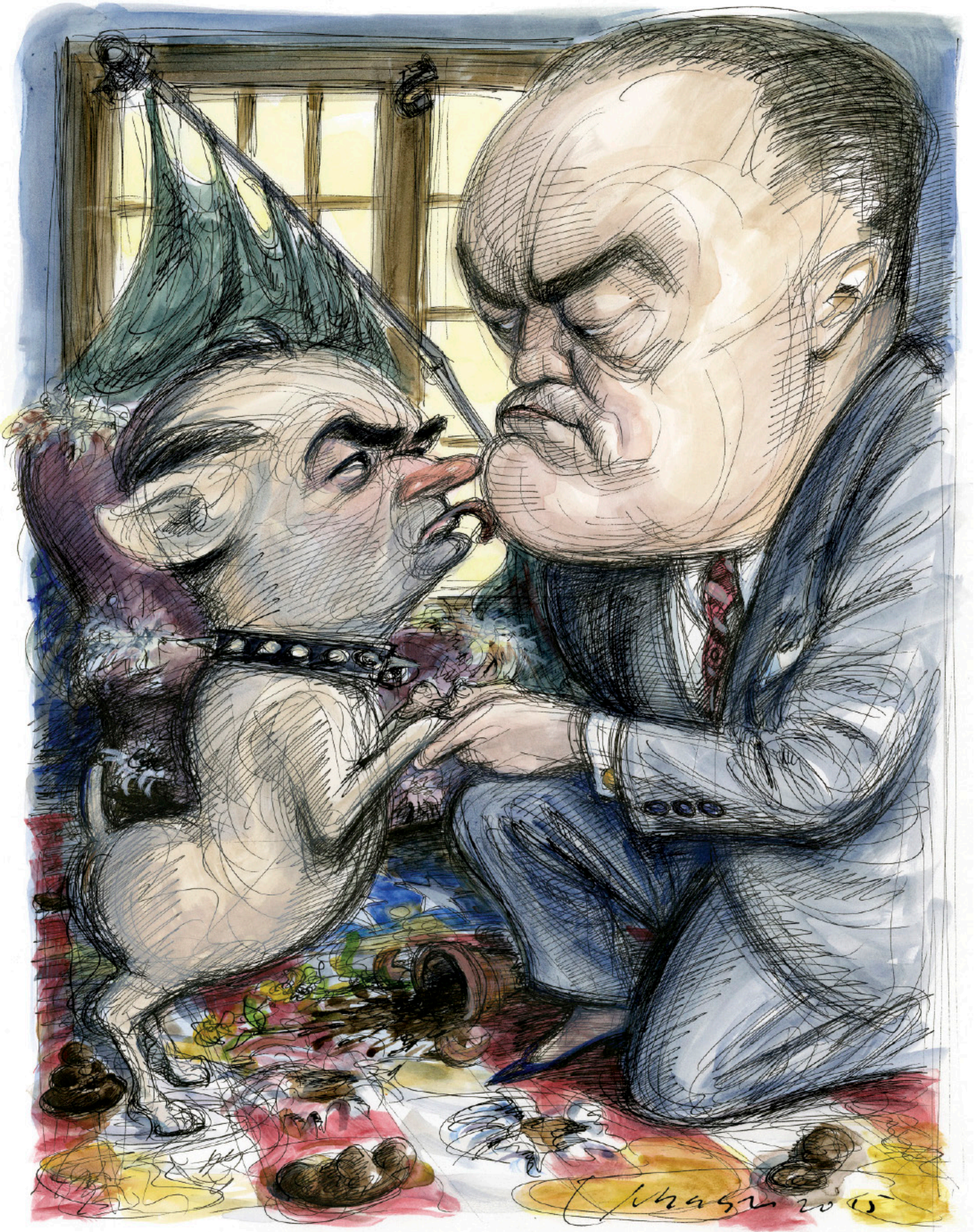
Back in the 1950s, as the sociologist Matthew Nichter put it, communism and socialism were, in the minds of most Americans, "roughly on a par with cannibalism and satanism."

As it happens, I agree with O'Dell's analysis, but my point here has nothing to do with whether he was right or wrong, but rather with the fact that during some critical years in our nation's history, this man—who at age 89 received the only standing ovation in seventeen years of *Nation* cruises—was not permitted to participate as himself, under his own name, in this country's political conversation. What we have lost by depriving ourselves of the expanded dialogue that O'Dell and others like him might have made possible is incalculable.

Other ways that the impact of McCarthyism/Hooverism/Cold War anticommunism lives on are so much a part of our country's woe-work that we fail even to notice them. I'll mention just a half-dozen examples:

§ Vietnam. Take the Vietnam War itself. Purging the State Department of the China hands (men like John Stewart Service, John Paton Davies, Oliver Edmund Clubb)—essentially because they were right in predicting that communism would come to China—meant that there was no one around to file dissenting cables when the decision was taken to follow the French into Vietnam. In addition to blood and treasure, the costs of that decision in terms of enemies and critics alone are still with us and impossible to measure.

§ Healthcare. We have heard so many denunciations of Obamacare that we tend to forget, as David Blumenthal and James Morone make clear in their definitive book, *The Heart of Power: Health and Politics in the Oval Office*, that from Harry Truman in 1945 to George W. Bush in 2003, "not a single economic team signed on happily to an extension of health care benefits." As often as not, "socialized medicine" were the scare words that opponents invoked. My own favorite anti-healthcare campaign was invented by Whitaker and Baxter, the savvy husband-and-wife public-relations team hired by


Juhasz 2015

His Master's Voice

VICTOR JUHASZ

the American Medical Association to undermine Harry Truman's healthcare plan. They published a fifteen-page pamphlet of questions and answers called "The Voluntary Way Is the American Way," including a concocted quotation from Lenin: "Q. Would socialized medicine lead to socialization of other phases of American life? A. Lenin thought so. He declared: Socialized medicine is the keystone to the arch of the Socialist State."

§ The arms race. Even though the Cold War is no more, the arms race to which it gave rise is still with us, which, in this nuclear age, is more problematic than ever. Even Senator Dianne Feinstein—who, despite her heroic push to release the Senate Intelligence Committee report on the CIA's post-9/11 torture, on many other issues seems to accept the premises of the defense/intelligence establishment—has written about how during the Cold War each side stockpiled something like 30,000 nuclear weapons to prevent the other from gaining an advantage; and how our budget for simply maintaining nuclear materials is insupportable: "our nuclear stockpile is competing for limited defense spending, money that could be used to address more pressing challenges such as the fight against the Islamic State and defending against cyberattacks."

§ The Central Intelligence Agency. Never mind the congressional report on CIA torture. The agency, founded in 1947, was from the outset more a covert-action arm than the research institute that its name would imply. As Tom Hayden has written recently for *The Nation*, "It's relevant today…because of the cancerous growth of Big Brother surveillance and the proliferation of clandestine operations branded in the name of 'democracy promotion,' from Cuba to the Ukraine." The pervasive use of secret-money campaigns makes it impossible to know whether operatives of our intelligence agencies have any role in harassing or steering social movements, or whether such roles have been passed on to private foundations. Democracy is increasingly in the dark.

According to Hayden, differences have "blurred" between the CIA and the US Agency for International Development, which spends an annual $20 million on "democracy promotion" in Cuba. The CIA continues to meddle in Ukraine and even played a role way back when in the arrest of Nelson Mandela. Such practices, Hayden notes, cast a long shadow that is still with us.

§ Pre-empting class analysis. I would further argue that the conflation of Marxism with the former Soviet Union and domestic subversion, so characteristic of the Cold War years, has had the side effect of stigmatizing anything that smacked of class analysis. As a result, for years Americans were deprived of some of the most relevant and probing analysis—and even identification—of our core economic problems. To a great extent, this is still true, although occasionally the mention of class seeps through. Thus a recent *New York Times* column made the connection between class and the environment, pointing out that even though the benefits of pollution control are more or less evenly spread across the population, environmentalism is a class issue. For example, ownership of stock in coal companies is concentrated in the hands of the wealthy, with all that this implies.

Other ways that the impact of McCarthyism lives on are so much a part of our country's woework that we fail even to notice them.

§ Big government. When Bill Clinton informed us that "the era of big government is over," he neglected to mention the context: that all federal aid—to education and whatever else—was under a cloud. No more New Deal; no New Deal 2.0. The idea of government itself was a victim of what Norman Thomas, the perennial Socialist candidate for president (himself a staunch anticommunist) used to delight in calling, as he raised his arms above his head, fingers aflutter, "*creeeeping* socialism."

How to calculate the consequences of the books not written, the scientific discoveries not pursued, a trade-union movement purged of its most energetic, creative and effective leaders (demonized as communists and fellow travelers)? All that is only part of the legacy of what David Caute has aptly called "the great fear." In her sophisticated study *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*, Ellen Schrecker does a fine job of showing how the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), passed as an anticommunist measure, undermined all of organized labor. The crippled labor movement helps to explain as much as anything the increased inequality that Thomas Piketty has newly brought to our attention.

But the legacy of a labor movement purged of its best and most radical members is not merely economic. As we know from what has gone before, its impact is also political (particularly where civil rights and liberties, not to mention global freedom itself, are concerned). In other words, McCarthyism/Hooverism may be long gone, but its aftermath is alive and as sick as ever. **150th**

The Left in Power

Why are liberal democracies so ineffective at bringing about greater economic equality?

WALDEN BELLO

NEXT TO CLIMATE CHANGE, INEQUALITY IS THE BURNING ISSUE of our time. In this regard, the evidence presented by Thomas Piketty, the United Nations and other sources is quite conclusive: the current rates of global inequality are unprecedented.

In his celebrated book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Piketty marshals a massive amount of data to show that rising inequality has been the norm since capitalist growth took off in the eighteenth century. Now, he says, things are likely to become even worse.

The only period when there was a reversal of this flow, Piketty writes, occurred in the middle decades of the twentieth century, when what he calls "exogenous shocks"—such as wars and the social revolutions they triggered—forced capitalist elites to make economic concessions. These social compromises were largely mediated by Keynesian or social-democratic political regimes. By the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, inequality had resumed its onward march under democratic regimes implementing neoliberal policies.

Piketty's remarks are unsettling to believers in democracy, which includes most of us. One of the things he seems to be saying, at least implicitly, is that democratic regimes—whose rise in the Global South paralleled the rise of neoliberalism in the North—don't really work when it comes

HIGH TIMES®

Salutes The Nation for 150 years of fearless progressive support for social, racial, economic and environmental justice through outstanding independent journalism.

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(As a magazine that just celebrated its 40th year, it's clear that
Great Publications Endure!)

TESTIMONIALS

ELINOR TATUM

PUBLISHER AND EDITOR IN CHIEF,
NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

The Nation* and the *New York Amsterdam News* have stood shoulder to shoulder in so many campaigns over the decades. While *The Nation* is the oldest weekly magazine in the country, the *Amsterdam News*, founded in 1909, is considered the oldest continuously published black newspaper in America. The struggles that both publications have faced have made us kindred spirits. I salute *The Nation* for 150 years of honest, steadfast and unbending reporting and its commitment to the truth in a world that sometimes would much rather hear fiction.

to containing economic inequality. Of course they enshrine formal *political* equality and institutionalize majority rule. But they are ineffective at bringing about greater *economic* equality.

My generation came of age—from the 1970s to the 1990s—fighting to oust dictatorships and bring about democracy in the Third World. One of our most potent arguments against authoritarianism was that it promoted the concentration of income in dictatorial cliques allied with transnational capital. We said that democracy would reverse this process of impoverishment and inequality. From Chile to Brazil to South Korea to the Philippines, fighting against dictatorship was a fight for both democratic choice and greater equality.

Yet the evidence now seems to clearly indicate that we were wrong. What Samuel Huntington called the "Third Wave" of democracy in the Global South went hand in hand with the spread of policies that hobbled the fight for greater economic equality from the outset.

The landed elite relied on the mechanisms of liberal democracy to subvert agrarian reform.

Democracy and Land Reform

The Philippines offers a classic case study of the limits of liberal democracy. In the twenty-nine years since we overthrew the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, many of us who fought for democratic institutions also prioritized agrarian reform, believing that this was the central project that would bring about more equality.

Things at first appeared to be headed in the right direction. With the ouster of Marcos in 1986, not only was a constitutional democracy set up, but a sweeping land-reform law—the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, or CARP—was passed to give millions of peasants title to their land. In contrast to the coercive programs in China, Vietnam and Cuba, redistribution would be accomplished peacefully.

Over the next few years, however, competitive elections were reduced to a mechanism whereby members of the elite fought one another for the privilege of ruling while consolidating their control over the political system. Indeed, the vast majority of those elected to Congress came from either the landlords or the big capitalist families. One of the victims of this entrenchment of class power was CARP.

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Protesters in Manila draw attention to the dire conditions faced by farmers in the Philippines (2010).

PAT ROQUE / AP

Stymied by a combination of coercion, legal obstructionism, and the conversion of land from agricultural to commercial and industrial purposes, the agrarian-reform process stalled. Ultimately, fewer than half of the original 10 million hectares designated for redistribution had been disbursed to peasants by 2008—some twenty years after the program was launched. Indeed, with little support in terms of social services, many peasants ended up reselling their land back to the landlords, while others lost their recently acquired land to aggressive legal action.

It was at this juncture that I and several other parliamentarians sponsored the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms, or CARPER. We had a hell of a time getting this law passed, but we finally managed to do so in August 2009. What made the difference were the peasant strikes and marches—including a 1,700-kilometer march from the southern island of Mindanao to the presidential palace in Manila—and efforts by activists to disrupt congressional sessions.

CARPER was a strong law. It plugged many of the loopholes in the original CARP, allocating some $3.3 billion to support land redistribution, seed and fertilizer subsidies, and agricultural-extension services. Most important, CARPER mandated that the distribution of all remaining lands had to be completed by June 30, 2014.

CARPER appeared to promise a new beginning. But despite monitoring and constant pushing by agrarian-reform advocates, the process of land acquisition and distribution proceeded at a snail's pace. Thanks to landlord resistance, bureaucratic inertia and a lack of political will, some 550,000 hectares—including much of the best private land in the country—remained undistributed as the deadline arrived.

In a last-ditch effort to save the program, I personally appealed to President Benigno Aquino III, with whom my party is allied, to fire his timid agrarian-reform chief and appoint someone who would not be afraid to apply scorched-earth methods to the recalcitrant landlord class. The president—a scion of one of the biggest landed families in the country—refused.

Even as the landed elite was relying on the mechanisms of liberal democracy to subvert agrarian reform—including by exploiting loopholes in the legislation and waging expensive legal battles in court—foreign powers like the United States, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were seeking to refashion our economy along neoliberal lines.

They succeeded.

Democracy and Structural Adjustment

Ultimately, it was not dictatorship but a democratically elected government that passed the automatic appropriations law that allowed foreign creditors to have the first cut of the Philippine budget. It was not a dictatorship but a democratically elected government that brought down the country's protective tariffs to less than 5 percent, thus wiping out most of our manufacturing capacity. It was not a dictatorship but a democratically elected government that brought us into the World Trade Organization, opening our agricultural market to the unrestrained entry of foreign commodities and leading to the erosion of our food security.

Today, even as the elites battle it out in the Philippines' thriving electoral arena, the rate of poverty—at nearly 28 percent—remains unchanged from the early 1990s. True, the economy has grown—but all of the studies show that the rate of inequality in the Philippines remains among the highest in Asia, underlining the fact that the fruits of growth continue to be appropriated by the top stratum of the population.

This isn't to say that key reforms have not taken place. A reproductive-health law critical to advancing women's rights was passed in the teeth of opposition by the Catholic Church. Civil-society pressure forced the abolition of the pork barrel, unprogrammed government funds given by the executive to members of the legislative branch in order to keep them on a short leash. A conditional cash-transfer program was instituted to provide direct income support to more than 4 million poor families. These, however, were small oases of reform in an overwhelmingly conservative social landscape.

Today, I sit in a legislative chamber in which roughly 80 percent of the members come from old and newly rich local elites—people who personify the Marxist dictum that economic power translates into political power and believe that this is the natural order of things, even as they declaim against inequality and corruption and extol democracy at every turn.

A Global Trend

The Philippine experience has been repeated throughout the Global South. Ironically, the liberal democracy we fought for in order to free ourselves from dictatorship became the system for our subjugation to local elites and foreign powers.

Even more than dictatorships, Western-style democracies are, we are forced to conclude, the natural system of governance under neoliberal capitalism, for they promote rather than restrain the savage forces of accumulation that lead to ever-greater levels of inequality and poverty. In fact, liberal-democratic systems are ideal for the economic elites, since they feature periodic electoral exercises that promote the illusion of equality, thus granting these systems an aura of legitimacy. The Philippines, it might be noted, has long been painted as a "social volcano." This volcano does occasionally shake, rattle and roll, but it never quite explodes the way real volcanoes do. A key reason is that the electoral system serves as a safety valve, holding out the possibility of change "if only the right people are elected to office."

The solution to the crisis of inequality is not to abandon democracy, but rather to deepen it.

Toward a New Democracy

However, the solution to the crisis of inequality is not to abandon democracy, as the Jurassic right would like (including the nostalgic pro-Marcos fringe in the Philippines), but rather to deepen it. To reverse this situation requires not just an alternative economic program based on justice, equity and ecological stability, but a new, more direct and more participatory democratic system.

People power must be institutionalized for periodic interventions against corruption and accumulated power, not abandoned once the insurrection has banished the old regime. Among the most important

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POETRY ARCHIVE

December 10, 1938

Hound Voice

William Butler Yeats

**Because we love bare hills and stunted trees
And were the last to choose the settled ground,
Its boredom of the desk or of the spade, because
So many years companioned by a hound,
Our voices carry; and though slumber bound,
Some few half wake and half renew their choice,
Give tongue, proclaim their hidden name—"hound voice."**

**The women that I picked spoke sweet and low
And yet gave tongue. "Hound Voices" were they all.
We picked each other from afar and knew
What hour of terror comes to test the soul,
And in that terror's name obeyed the call,
And understood, what none have understood,
Those images that waken in the blood.**

**Some day we shall get up before the dawn
And find our ancient hounds before the door,
And wide awake know that the hunt is on;
Stumbling upon the blood-dark track once more,
That stumbling to the kill beside the shore;
Then cleaning out and bandaging of wounds,
And chants of victory amid the encircling hounds.**

features of this new democracy, representative institutions would be balanced by the creation of other institutions enabling direct democracy. Civil society would organize itself politically to act as a counterpoint to—even a check on—the dominant state institutions. Citizens would nurture and maintain a "parliament of the streets" that could be brought to bear on the decision-making process at critical points: the institutionalization, if you will, of a parallel "people power." Citizen socialization must move away from the idealization of liberal-democratic reforms and instead bring people together in the formulation of new, more participatory democratic arrangements. Likewise, equality—in the radical French Revolution sense of the term, not simply the bourgeois notion of "equality of opportunity"—must be brought back to center stage.

Finally, unlike in a liberal democracy—where most people participate in decision-making only during elections—political participation must become a constant activity, with people evolving into active citizens.

Theorizing the features of a "new democracy" is one thing; bringing it about is another. What forms of struggle must we employ to leap from the old to the new regime? We must not give up the battle for reform via the mechanisms of representative electoral democracy, but we should combine it with political mobilization outside the parameters of the liberal-democratic regime. Insurrectionary methods, exactly like the people-power uprisings in the Philippines, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, must be part of the repertoire of progressive groups.

Triggers of Change

The big question is: How do we bring about such fundamental reforms at a time when organized elites and disorganized, quiescent citizenries appear to be the norm in both the Global North and Global South?

Noting that "the long-term dynamics of the wealth distribution are potentially terrifying," Piketty asks whether the only real solution lies in violent reactions and radical shocks, such as the wars and revolutions of the first half of the twentieth century.

Perhaps we are in for some of those violent reactions and radical shocks. Perhaps the current developments in Iraq and Syria are not marginal events, but rather explosions that will sooner or later occur in other regions, including the North. When the political explosions occasioned by inequality and the search for identity are combined with what many foresee as the dire social consequences of the climate apocalypse, then perhaps we are not too far away from catastrophic change after all.

Will liberal democracies survive and manage these exogenous shocks as they did in the mid-twentieth century? This is by no means guaranteed. Indeed, they may just as easily be overcome by internal and external pressures, leaving future historians to wonder—as the philosopher Richard Rorty puts it—why the golden age of democracy lasted only about 200 years. **150th**

Revisiting "Myths About the Middle East": The Case for Disengagement

It is time to walk away and leave the region to its own bad behavior.

KAI BIRD

The Nation.

MYTHS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

THIRTY-THREE YEARS AGO, VICTOR NAVASKY and I crafted an unsigned editorial for a special issue of *The Nation* devoted to "Myths About the Middle East" [December 5, 1981]. Sadly, it remains prescient: "Israel's democratic character—and its legitimacy and distinctiveness as a Middle Eastern state—is placed in increasing jeopardy with the passage of each day of military subjugation for 1.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The more 'successful' Israel is in introducing a large settler population into the occupied territories, the closer it is to becoming a total garrison state." We also argued that "messianic Zionism—with its assertion that all Jews are one nation, that the ingathering of the diaspora is the raison d'être of Israel—was an outmoded or unrealizable idea."

Our editorial merely prefaced a collection of astute observations by Boas Evron, Edward Said, Christopher Hitchens, Edward Mortimer, Sadik Al-Azm and Michael Reisman. It was our intent to have each of these public intellectuals demystify what we believed to be the fundamental problem in the Middle East: the question of national identity. Collectively, they explored post-Zionism, the evolving nature of Israeli identity versus Jewish diaspora iden-

An Israeli solider returns from the Gaza Strip, August 2014.

TSAFRIR ABAYOV / AP

tity, Palestinian identity, anti-Zionism versus anti-Semitism, and the status of the occupied territories under international law. Nothing essential to the Arab-Israeli conflict was left unexamined—and, unfortunately, everything written all those years ago remains acutely relevant to our current predicaments.

TESTIMONIALS

RICHARD TRUMKA

PRESIDENT OF THE AFL-CIO

***The Nation* and America's first labor union were founded within a year of each other. Over the last 150 years, both have served as strong voices for working men and women. We celebrate *The Nation*'s tremendous achievements, while recognizing the work that remains. Across our country and around the world, workers are falling behind, while big corporations continue to put profits before people. Falling wages have made it harder for families to get by, and corporate money funds right-wing efforts to silence the voices of men and women in the workplace. In the face of long odds and determined opponents, publications like *The Nation* are needed now more than ever. Where there are dark places, *The Nation* will be there to shine a light. Where there is injustice, *The Nation* will be there to speak out. Where workers are in need of a voice to tell their story, *The Nation* will be there to help; and just as they have for the last century and a half, Americans will be reading.**

Identity continues to be the problem in both Israel and the Arab world. The myth persists in Israel today that the early Zionists were trying to create a "Jewish state." They were not. They tried and in fact succeeded in creating a new national identity for those Jews who wished to leave the diaspora. They became Israelis, living in a Hebrew-speaking republic. And yet, today, Israel is both more secular—think of the beaches of Tel Aviv—and more theocratic and Orthodox in its Jerusalem enclaves. The reality is that Israel is a multi-ethnic, multireligious society, and it makes no sense to insist as a precondition for peace that its neighbors recognize it as "the Jewish state." Such a precondition is merely another obstacle erected by a prime minister who opposes a two-state solution.

As Boas Evron warned thirty-three years ago, "the promise of Israel as a 'haven for the Jewish people' has been proved false." Whereas the Jewish diaspora has flourished in America and elsewhere, the Jewish population of the Hebrew-speaking republic known as Israel lives in a besieged state of mind. Its current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warns repeatedly of the risk of "another Holocaust." And since we live in an era when even plutonium suitcase bombs are technically feasible, and since Israel has never defined its borders or negotiated a genuine peace with its neighbors, the fear of a nuclear event in this dangerous neighborhood is not just another paranoid symptom of an admittedly often demagogic Israeli politician.

Israel has itself become a nuclear-armed state with a powerful military, and over the decades it has waged periodic wars with disproportionate violence against Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. But as we predicted in 1981, the real danger to Israeli democracy is from within. Around 25 percent of all first-graders inside Israel—excluding the occupied territories—come from Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox families; another 25 percent come from the families of Christian or Muslim Palestinian-Israelis.

The Arabs are weary of our shallow promises of security and democracy, and all our flaccid diplomatic efforts seem only to sustain a dead-end status quo.

This demographic picture suggests that the unresolved question of Israeli national identity will become even more acute in the future—and that only a secular construct can accommodate such differences. In addition, there are as many as 700,000 Israelis living in the occupied territories, where Israel effectively controls the lives of the 4.4 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. All told, there are more than 6 million Jewish Israelis and 6 million Palestinians living between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan. Clearly, these two communities are on a demographic collision course.

Israel cannot claim to be both Jewish and democratic if it retains control over the daily life of so many people who define their identity as other than Jewish Israeli. And so, of course, a two-state solution involving the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital, is the only obvious and wholly rational solution. And just as clearly, this solution is not happening—at least in the near future, and perhaps ever.

ON THE ARAB SIDE OF THE equation, things are just as convoluted. But it is still all about identity. Polls often show that a majority of Palestinians will settle for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. But in the last Palestinian election in 2006, Hamas—a fundamentalist Islamic party that formally rejects a two-state solution—achieved a plurality, soundly defeating Fatah, the secular party. The outcome precipitated what amounted to a Palestinian civil war. Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, while Fatah retained control of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Hamas still employs terror to "resist" an ongoing virtual Israeli occupation and to achieve its political goals. The most recent Gaza war—in which more than 2,100 Palestinians and seventy-three Israelis died—nevertheless persuaded many Palestinians that in the absence of real progress toward sovereignty, Hamas remains a viable alternative. Sadly, there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the right-wing Israeli opponents of any Palestinian state and Hamas: these two enemies need each other to deter any kind of nonviolent political compromise.

In the meantime, the Arab Awakening of recent years has created its own counterrevolution. The initial uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria were fueled by the pent-up demands for a secular civil society. The protesters fervently sought modernity and common democratic rights. This was undoubtedly a good development, long overdue and still unfinished. But when Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood won the country's first post-Mubarak election and then overreached by taking steps to undermine secular democratic rights, the military autocracy seized on the moment to re-establish its control. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's regime proved willing to mow down more than 1,000 unarmed protesters to impose a dictatorship more draconian than Mubarak's. Likewise, in Syria, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad has instigated a civil war that has killed more than 200,000 people.

And then there's the ongoing civil war in Iraq—inspired by our own 2003 invasion of that country—which has greatly inflamed brutal sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shiites. This, in turn, has created a political vacuum, most recently filled by an extremist Sunni criminal mafia—known as Daesh in Arabic, or the Islamic State (ISIS) in English—operating in both Syria and Iraq. Our most recent military intervention—an aerial bombing campaign against this so-called caliphate—may serve only to incite further Salafist terrorism against American targets. It also threatens to drag the Obama administration—and the United States—into yet another interminable Middle Eastern war.

The Middle East today is thus a far more dangerous neighborhood than it was three decades ago. Unimaginative leaders in Israel and throughout the Arab world have made bad choices, but America's ill-considered military interventions have consistently made things worse.

So what is America to do? I love the Middle East. My earliest childhood memories are of Jerusalem. I love the colors and smells and cadence of Arabic spoken in the streets of Cairo or Beirut. I also love the modernity and verve of Tel Aviv. But all my instincts are to protect my Middle East from my America. These are two different worlds—and we Americans, firmly ensconced in one of these worlds, have no understanding of the other.

Furthermore, after all our bloody, misbegotten interventions, we have no standing, no legitimacy as mediators, let alone as peacekeepers. I assure you, we do nothing to improve the situation with our boots on the ground and our deadly drones circling overhead. In the Arab world, we have historically aligned ourselves with generals and kings and narrow-minded sectarian tribal leaders. In Israel, we have become the ultimate enablers of Likudites devoted to colonization.

It is time to walk away and leave these people to their own bad behavior. Let the Israelis occupy—and then let them grapple with the consequences. I oppose any academic boycott of Israeli institutions, but I support an economic boycott of products and services in the settlements. I believe we need to engage at every possible point with the Israeli people—but also to impose a policy of coldly correct diplomatic relations with the Israeli government. I would not give the Israelis a dime in military assistance. And I believe we should support the right of Palestinians (and others) to petition the International Criminal Court for redress when their human rights are violated.

The pundits will say that disengagement with Israel is not politically *realistic*. They are right. But they are wrong to dismiss it as *unthinkable*. Less than a year after our 1981 editorial, Geoffrey Kemp, President Reagan's chief aide for Middle East affairs in the National Security Council, advised: "The President should tell [Menachem] Begin that there can be no resolution of the Palestinian problem unless he abandons expectations of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza." (The memo in which Kemp made this recommendation was declassified only in 2010.) Kemp also spelled out the steps that could be taken if the Israeli prime minister defied the president, including the possibility of withholding economic aid to Israel. In the event, the Reagan administration did not muster the political courage to force Israel to halt its settlements policy—and we are now all paying the price.

I love the colors and smells of Cairo or Beirut. I also love the modernity and verve of Tel Aviv. But all my instincts are to protect my Middle East from my America.

Over the years in these pages, I have made a wholly *pragmatic* argument for holding a referendum that would impose a two-state solution, with borders based on the Green Line and with East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. I believe that a majority of both Palestinians and Israelis would approve this broad solution, and a referendum would commit the politicians to a deal. But clearly, this is not going to happen—and without such a referendum, American policy is merely shoring up a dangerous and unjust status quo. The professionals of the "peace process" (I have in mind such diplomats as Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk) have come up with nothing over three decades. They have failed time and time again, and their failure has cost many Palestinian and Israeli lives.

Disengagement should now be our policy with both Israel and the Arab world. We Americans should urge our government to end all arms sales to any Arab nation ruled by a general, dictator or king. We need to isolate and diplomatically contain any Arab regime that has demonstrably killed unarmed protesters, as in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. We should also close our military installations in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar.

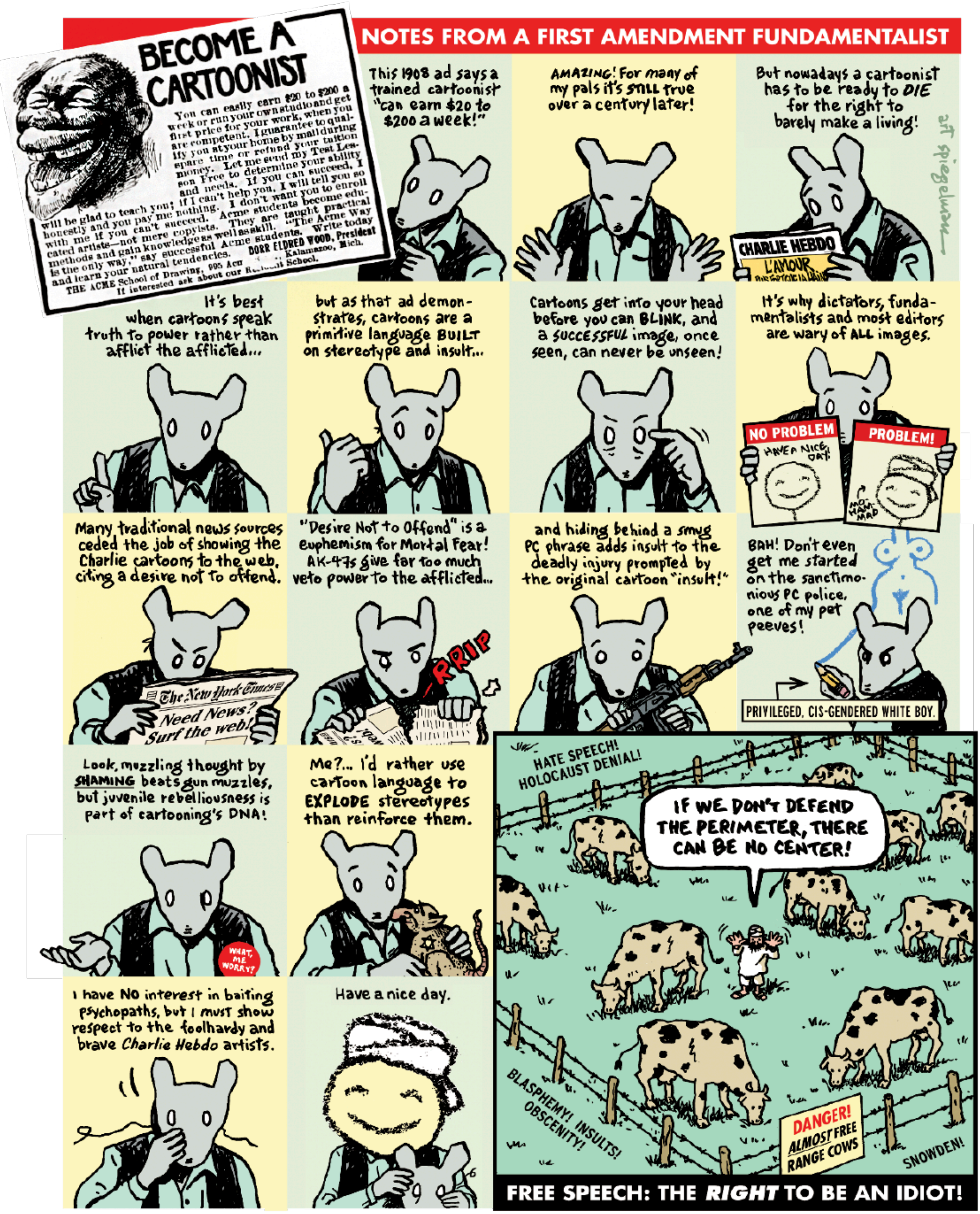
Such a dramatic, categorical and evenhanded withdrawal of American arms and treasure would deal a bracing shock to the region's ruling elites. But it would be a good and decent thing for all concerned. The so-called experts, our TV talking heads, will be quick to object that such a withdrawal would only open the gates to the barbaric head-choppers. These experts are wrong: the Salafist nihilists operating under the black flag of a farcical caliphate have bitter enemies all around them. They have no real future in the twenty-first century. And in any case, these sectarian wars are not ours—and our government has no business sacrificing young American men and women in such an ephemeral mission.

The experts will call disengagement quixotic. They will speak in Kissingeresque bass tones about America's "strategic" interests in Arabian oil. But I don't care about oil, a fungible commodity that will be sold in any event on the global market by any regime that controls such carbon resources—especially since, given our climate peril, we should be focusing on renewable and sustainable energy. And I don't care about the "strategic" consequences: they cannot be worse than the Middle East we have mismanaged.

We Americans must have a lower profile in the Middle East. Of course we can provide humanitarian assistance. But the Arabs are weary of our shallow promises of security and democracy, and all our flaccid diplomatic efforts to sustain the "peace process" in reality seem only to sustain a dead-end status quo. Enough.

A year before Navasky and I plotted our special issue, we devoted an issue of the magazine to an essay by the late, great historian William Appleman Williams. "What happens," he wrote, "if we simply say no to empire as a way of life?" That is the essential question America faces in the Middle East.

150th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NOTES FROM A FIRST AMENDMENT FUNDAMENTALIST
This 1908 ad says a trained cartoonist "can earn $20 to $200 a week!"
AMAZING! For many of my pals it's STILL true over a century later!
But nowadays a cartoonist has to be ready to DIE for the right to barely make a living!
CHARLIE HEBDO
L'AMOUR
art spiegelman
It's best when cartoons speak truth to power rather than afflict the afflicted...
but as that ad demonstrates, cartoons are a primitive language BUILT on stereotype and insult...
Cartoons get into your head before you can BLINK, and a SUCCESSFUL image, once seen, can never be unseen!
It's why dictators, fundamentalists and most editors are wary of ALL images.
NO PROBLEM
HAVE A NICE DAY!
PROBLEM!
MO-HAM-MAD
Many traditional news sources ceded the job of showing the Charlie cartoons to the web, citing a desire not to offend.
The New York Times
Need News? Surf the web!
"Desire Not to Offend" is a euphemism for Mortal Fear! AK-47s give far too much veto power to the afflicted...
RRIP
and hiding behind a smug PC phrase adds insult to the deadly injury prompted by the original cartoon "insult!"
BAH! Don't even get me started on the sanctimonious PC police, one of my pet peeves!
PRIVILEGED, CIS-GENDERED WHITE BOY.
Look, muzzling thought by SHAMING beats gun muzzles, but juvenile rebelliousness is part of cartooning's DNA!
WHAT, ME WORRY?
Me?... I'd rather use cartoon language to EXPLODE stereotypes than reinforce them.
I have NO interest in baiting psychopaths, but I must show respect to the foolhardy and brave Charlie Hebdo artists.
Have a nice day.
HATE SPEECH!
HOLOCAUST DENIAL!
IF WE DON'T DEFEND THE PERIMETER, THERE CAN BE NO CENTER!
BLASPHEMY! INSULTS! OBSCENITY!
DANGER! ALMOST FREE RANGE COWS
SNOWDEN!
FREE SPEECH: THE RIGHT TO BE AN IDIOT!

Drawing the Line

ART SPIEGELMAN

Lesser-Evilism We Can Believe In

Should we put government in the hands of a party determined to subvert it, or a party—however flawed—that believes it still has a role to play in securing the common good?

MICHAEL TOMASKY

BACK WHEN I WAS A MUCH YOUNGER MAN, I WORKED BRIEFLY for a Democratic member of Congress from my home state. (This was when West Virginia still had Democratic members of Congress.) I performed the sorts of duties still executed by eager young things today, unglamorous tasks but nevertheless important ones to the good taxpaying people back home: answering constituent mail, helping widows get their husbands' black-lung benefits and so on.

One morning, a union man from my hometown called the office. There was a painting job being done at a Department of Energy facility somewhere in the district. The company that won the contract to do the painting, my union man explained, was trying to pay less than the "prevailing wage," the typical hourly wage for the area as determined by the government. In fact, considerably less—enough that these workers were going to feel it. Could I help? I had no idea what to do. But the labor leader said he had a contact at the Department of Labor who might be of use.

This was in 1984—in other words, Ronald Reagan's Department of Labor. So it was with considerable trepidation that I began punching in the phone number, but it turned out that my union man did not steer me wrong. The fellow I spoke with was a Carter holdover who actually believed in enforcing labor law. I explained the situation. Though the conversation was long ago, I do remember him whispering to me that not everyone recently installed in the nearby cubicles shared his old-fashioned views, and I was lucky I'd found him. He said he'd hop right on it, and a couple days later, my union man called back to say all was well and thank me.

When we on the broad liberal-left have one of our quadrennial debates about whether to support the sell-out Democratic presidential nominee or cast a "strategic" vote of protest for a Green or other third-party candidate, the debate is almost entirely about the personal and political merits and demerits of the two individuals. And the two usual tentpoles of the conversation are that the putative nominee is a timorous corporate hack who won't come anywhere near bringing about the needed fundamental change, and that, yes, the nominee may well be that, but he or she is in numerous ways far better than the Republican alternative and thus the "lesser of two evils," in the argot.

More serious debates will sometimes compare the positions and platforms of the Democrat and the left alternative. But in my experience, these debates also tend to get personal pretty quickly: "I just can't stand Al Gore," and so on. We're human beings, after all, and it's understandable to feel that you have to be able to at least tolerate the sight of this person you're going to be exposed to on a daily basis for the next four to eight years.

Casting a protest vote is probably the single least effective way to nudge Democrats to the left. Politicians usually respond to people who vote for them, not against them.

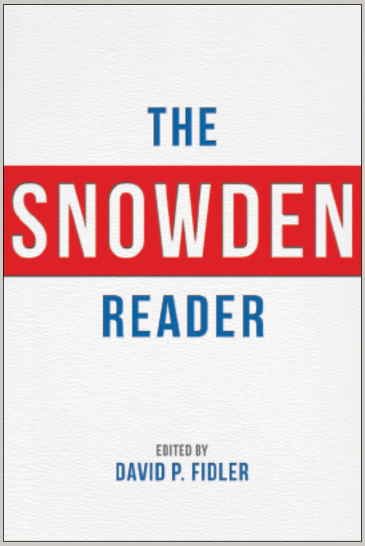
But it's not a good way to think about lesser-evilism. Yes, the candidates' platform positions tell us certain things about their political imagination, their vision of a just society and, more prosaically, which wealthy interests they're unwilling to risk offending. So they do count for something.

But the right way to think about one's vote for president is to think about the presidency not as a person, but as a thing—a huge, sprawling, complex, cumbrous, many-tentacled thing. The executive branch is a corporation. Or, if it makes you feel better, a huge nonprofit. It's thousands of people doing thousands of things: big things, like setting Middle East policy, and small things, like making sure a few painters in central West Virginia are getting a fair wage for federal contract work.

And on this score, the differences between the two major parties are vaster than vast. This maybe didn't used to be so, back when there were actual moderate Republicans. But now? With the Republican Party controlled by the radical right, a Republican presidency doesn't mean merely that you're going to have to see that distasteful reactionary with the cracker-ish accent on your TV screen for the next few years. It means that thousands of people are going to be making many thousands of deeply reactionary decisions, across all federal agencies and departments. This stuff doesn't make the front pages. It rarely makes the news at all. But it goes on, and it affects all of us every day: decisions about civil-rights and environmental enforcement, about the protection of public lands, about the ethical questions raised in scientific research, about the safety of consumer products (and now financial instruments, thanks to Elizabeth Warren), about which polluting or swindling corporations to investigate and with how much zeal… You get the picture.

When you think of the presidency in these terms, Hillary Clinton's various and real ideological impurities become less central, and the idea that the executive branch will be staffed either by people who think they ought to carry out the mission of the agency they work for, or by people who are scheming to subvert that mission, becomes pivotal. And this is why I say that no matter who the candidate is—no matter how deeply in hock to Wall Street, no matter how tepid her (ahem) inequality platform—the responsible person of the left must vote for the Democrat. Not strategically, but on principle. And not sometimes, or only in the states where it might truly matter. Everywhere, and every time.

LET'S DRILL DOWN NOW INTO A LITTLE more detail. Do you remember the US Attorneys scandal under George W. Bush? On December 7, 2006, Alberto Gonzales, Bush's attorney general, fired seven US Attorneys in a single day. All had been appointed by Bush but were later found to be ideologically deficient in one way or another by the White House political operation. The main issue? The White House had received complaints from its grassroots people in several of these states that the prosecutors had failed to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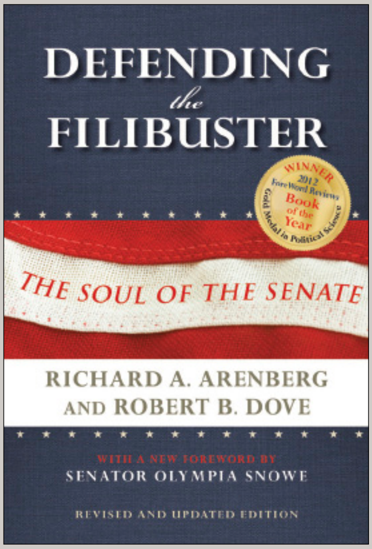
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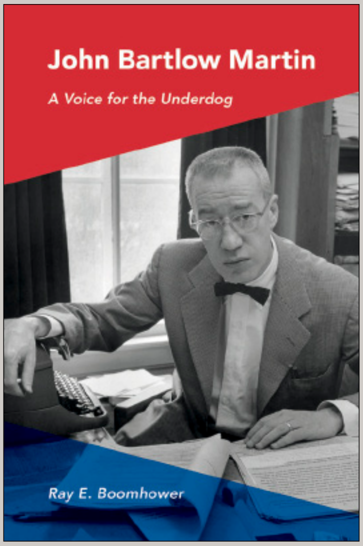
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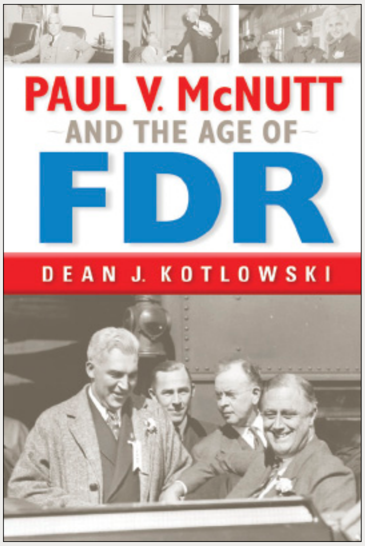
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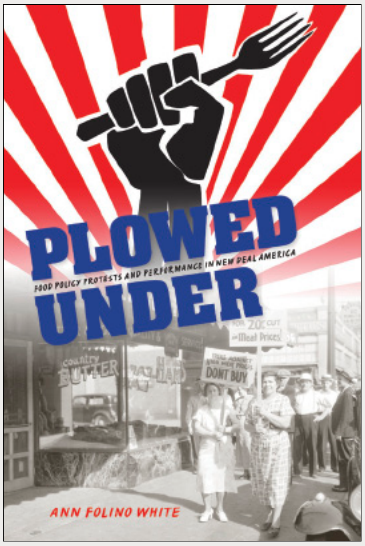
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ANN FOLINO WHITE

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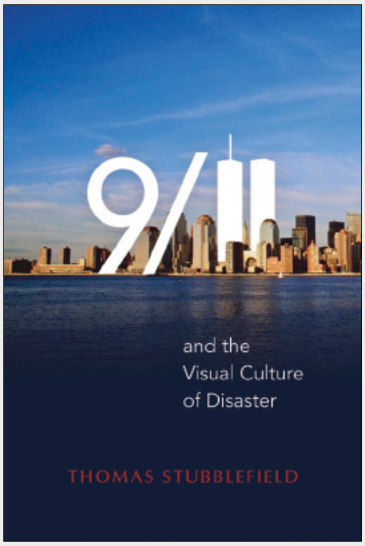
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and the
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of Disaster
THOMAS STUBBLEFIELD

An engaging book exploring the absence of image in post-9/11 culture.

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pursue—guess what?—“voter fraud” allegations. Bush himself brought this to Gonzales’s attention in the fall of 2006, and within a couple of months, the ax of Justice smote these seven heads.

It was a huge scandal—one that dragged on for months and led to several firings and resignations and a series of disquieting revelations. Among the more disquieting was the fact that a number of Justice Department lawyers had received their law degrees from Christian universities. The poster child here was a woman named Monica Goodling, who helped plan the firings. She began her service to Bush as an opposition researcher in the 2000 campaign. And she’d collected her legal sheepskin from Pat Robertson’s Regent University.

A handful of others, it turned out, had graduated from Regent and other conservative Christian law schools, like Ave Maria (yes, that’s a real thing). So think about that in prospective terms. A Republican president is elected. The Department of Justice becomes populated by a smattering of Ivy Leaguers—they’ll still do that, for purposes of cred—but also by dozens of people whose legal education was framed by conservative Christian doctrine. What decisions will they make? What cases will they pursue—and not pursue? I submit to you that a pretty big hint is contained in the fact that the main transgression of the Bush US Attorneys was their failure to probe “voter fraud.”

This is the reality across the issues spectrum. Thirty or forty years ago, the only people who wanted to go into government service were basically liberal. Many were Republicans, but they believed in government doing something.

But now that has changed utterly. The conservative infrastructure, as we call it—that sweaty congeries of think tanks and institutes financed by people like the Koch brothers—spends millions of dollars a year training young conservatives for government… well, it’s not quite accurate to say “service,” is it? They are taught to distrust government (not that they didn’t before) and to go work in Republican campaigns, thence to win appointments to positions at Justice or the EPA or the Department of the Interior or the FCC (care about net neutrality, do you?) or what have you, where they are coached by the higher-up political appointees in the art of not doing what they are theoretically, and indeed legally, there to do.

This is what you’re helping unleash on this country with your “protest vote.” And something else I’ve noticed over the years: protest votes tend to be cast by people who don’t have much skin in the game when it comes to the direct delivery of government services. That is, their own day-to-day lives won’t really be affected much by which party controls the White House. But most people who are direct beneficiaries of government programs and services can’t afford the luxury of being protest voters. Yes, millions of them vote Republican, because their guns (or whatever) are more important to them than their pay packet. But most poorer people still vote Democratic, and I can’t imagine that you could have gone to, say, the corner of 145th Street and Lenox Avenue in early November of 2000 and found many Ralph Nader voters.

TESTIMONIALS

ALEC BALDWIN

In my lifetime, the most significant nontechnological change in the area of politics has been the transformation of the media. Traditionally liberal outlets have taken to pulling their punches. Hard news that exposes the essential friction between democracy and capitalism—and how that conflict may best be managed—is viewed as castor oil that should be taken only on an as-needed basis.

Concurrently, Fox News has achieved ratings supremacy by offering the culturally and economically disenfranchised a series of convenient scapegoats. Perhaps its greatest success has been in pulling moderates to the right and liberals to the center by demonizing liberal thought as un-American, even seditious, while its indefatigable online armies attack their chosen liberal targets 24/7. There are few places where one can still read thorough, courageous journalism. *The Nation*, thankfully, is one such place.

In other words, there are Americans, many millions of them, for whom a Democratic presidency, even a deeply flawed one, is personally important. Yes, Obamacare wasn’t all that it should have been. But yes, it has insured more than 6 million Americans with Medicaid expansion. With a Republican president and Republican majorities in Congress, they’re out of luck. Those are real people, and their fate alone seals the argument for me.

There are many ways to protest in this country. People should pursue them all with zeal—except in the presidential voting booth.

I KNOW ALL THE COUNTERARGUMENTS, AND A LOT of them are spot-on. They were best expressed by Adolph Reed Jr. in the March 2014 issue of *Harper’s Magazine*, though Reed has been making such arguments for a long time. He argues, correctly, that the only real long-term answer to getting better Democratic presidential candidates is a reinvigorated labor movement. And, of course, he isn’t wrong at all that today’s Democratic Party is too corporatized.

So how to fix these problems? Build a labor movement. Elect more Sherrod Browns, where possible. Apply whatever pressure you possibly can to Democrats to make them tackle issues like inequality more directly. There are ways. But casting a protest vote is probably the single least effective way to nudge Democrats to the left. Politicians usually respond to people who vote for them, not against them. If a Democratic member of Congress or presidential candidate wins office over the conspicuous protests of voters on the left, he or she will ignore those voters completely once in office. This is how they think. So, if anything, protest votes have the effect of nudging Democrats to the right!

This is an age-old debate, of course, in the pages of *The Nation*, which has often urged its readers to cast such protest votes. And more: back in 1956, the magazine editorialized in favor of a vote for Adlai Stevenson and then invited its readers to consider four options, with contributors making the case for Dwight Eisenhower (“constructive moderation”), Stevenson (“He stood his ground to ‘talk sense’ to the American people at a time when hysteria was so rampant”), the socialist alternatives (“To choose between Republican X and

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Democrat Y is merely to choose which particular representative of the capitalist class will help make the laws in the interest of that class") and, finally, not voting at all.

This last entry was the most interesting, authored as it was by W.E.B. Du Bois. He scorned Eisenhower for "carrying on the greatest preparation for war in the history of mankind," and Stevenson for "surrender[ing] all party differences in foreign affairs." And he found Stevenson, accurately, to be not so great on civil rights. But the magazine itself said to vote Stevenson.

Digging back even further, we find that no less an eminence than the founding grandfather of this magazine has my back on this question. The year was 1864—an election year—and the venue was a January meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. A debate ensued as to whether Abraham Lincoln was doing enough for the cause of freedom. Wendell Phillips, a lawyer and crusading abolitionist, introduced a resolution that criticized the Lincoln administration for being "ready to sacrifice the interest and honor of the North to secure a sham peace…leaving the freedmen and the Southern States under the control of the late slaveholders."

But William Lloyd Garrison stepped forward and defended Lincoln: "The President must be judged by his possibilities, rather than by our wishes or by the highest abstract moral standard. In my judgment the re-election of Abraham Lincoln…would be the safest and wisest course." Garrison—whose son, ironically, was named Wendell Phillips Garrison, in honor of his adversary that day—lost the argument, much as I imagine I'm probably not making any headway with many of you. Phillips's resolution passed. But Garrison stuck to his guns, delivering a short but powerful pro-Lincoln speech that May that is a textbook defense of lesser-evil incrementalism:

> When I remember how nearly a majority, even at this hour, is the seditious element of the North, and then remember that Abraham Lincoln has struck the chains from the limbs of more than three millions of slaves; that he has expressed his earnest desire for the total abolition of slavery; that he has implored the Border States to get rid of it; that he has recognized the manhood and citizenship of the colored population of our country; that he has armed upwards of a hundred thousand of them, and recognized them as soldiers under the flag; when I remember that this Administration has recognized the independence of Liberia and Haiti; when I remember that it has struck a death blow at the foreign slave trade by granting the right of search; when I remember that we have now nearly reached the culmination of our great struggle for the suppression of the rebellion and its cause, I do not feel disposed, for one, to take this occasion, or any occasion, to say anything very harshly against Abraham Lincoln.

Garrison accepts here that Lincoln had enemies—powerful, wealthy, deeply reactionary enemies. So does Barack Obama, and so does Hillary Clinton. Sure, I wish both were more courageous. But both are also circumscribed by financial, institutional and structural forces that are far more powerful than their own personal will or lack thereof.

That's something that hasn't changed since Lincoln's day. But something else *has* changed: the way the entire machinery of government will be redirected toward reactionary purposes if a Republican wins the White House. The other side already has Congress (perhaps for the foreseeable future). And it has the Supreme Court, although this raises another argument, and a powerful one: if the next president serves from 2017 to 2025 (two terms), she or he will quite possibly name four new justices to the Court. In other words, a Democratic president can flip the Court to a liberal majority that would uphold and reinstate key portions of the Voting Rights Act, keep *Roe v. Wade* the law of the land, undo *Citizens United* and associated rulings, reverse the *Hobby Lobby* decision, countermand the Roberts Court's odious school-resegregation decision of 2007, and who knows what else. And that liberal majority, if the president chooses well, could stay in place for thirty years.

There are many ways to protest in this country. People should pursue them all with zeal—except in the presidential voting booth. No Democratic president is ever going to be everything one wants. But too many millions of Americans need the many-tentacled presidency to be working for them rather than against them. **150th**

The next president will quite possibly name four new justices to the Supreme Court. In other words, she or he can flip the Court to a liberal majority—one that could stay in place for thirty years.

Occupy and Organize

Occupy Wall Street put inequality at the center of our politics. Only an independent movement will keep it there.

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

WE LIVE IN AN OCCUPY MOMENT. INEQUALITY HAS EXceeded the extremes of the Gilded Age, while most Americans struggle merely to stay afloat. Leaders in both parties now serve up dueling populist appeals. President Obama calls inequality the "defining challenge of our time." Jeb Bush echoes that statement, proclaiming that "the opportunity gap is the defining issue of our time." Even Mitt Romney, before he gave up on another presidential run, decried a country in which "the rich have gotten richer, income inequality has gotten worse and there are more people in poverty in America than ever before."

But extreme inequality has been growing for years—indeed, working people have been losing ground for more than three decades. Moreover, bad times come and go, while poverty has been with us forever. So why has populism become the coin of the political realm now?

Surely, it is Occupy Wall Street—the brazen movement that briefly occupied city squares across the country in 2011—that helped to turn inequality from an accepted condition into a political issue. Occupy was scorned for not having a platform; its organizers were dismissed as idealistic anarchists; and its time in the sun was brief. But its message—"We are the 99 percent"—and its indictment of Wall Street and the greed of the 1 percent were electric. Occupy transformed the national debate and gave Americans a new way of looking at things. The media began reporting on "the new inequality," and

Barack Obama borrowed the message for his re-election campaign. The limits of the old debate were shattered.

Movements Drive Political Change

America's two parties, we are told, are more polarized than ever. Yet the choices they offer are remarkably constricted. A suffocating bipartisan consensus cloaks the defining elements of our political economy: a national-security state that polices the world; global trade and tax policies that protect the interests of multinational banks and corporations; Wall Street greed and the financialization of the economy; the slow erosion of public capacity and investment; our remarkably stingy shared security, from healthcare to retirement; the purblind poisoning of the planet. Both parties accept the basic ways that the deck is stacked to favor the few.

The consensus undergirding these policies has survived military defeat and financial debacle. The two parties wage furious debates about the color of the frosting, but the cake is already baked. Only independent citizens' movements have any chance of disrupting the kitchen.

The great changes in America have been ratified—not won—at the ballot box. They've been won by citizens' movements that arise outside the national consensus. *The Nation* was founded by abolitionists who challenged a political order on the continuing shame of slavery. A populist movement was necessary to take on the robber barons and limit the exploitation by the emerging industrial order at the end of the nineteenth century. The civilizing movements of our own time—civil rights, women's rights, environmentalism, gay liberation, the antiwar movement, immigrants' rights—transformed injustices that were enforced by both parties.

Movements challenge what is considered morally acceptable; they offer new ways of seeing the world around us. When they're successful, their concerns are co-opted by smart, ambitious political leaders. The Republican progressive Teddy Roosevelt took much of his agenda from the Populist movement and party. Workers' movements drove FDR's New Deal. The antiwar movement forced leaders in both parties to understand that the calamity in Vietnam could not be sustained.

Before George W. Bush launched the Iraq War, record protests took place across the globe. *The New York Times* hailed the rise of a new "superpower": world public opinion. Bush got bipartisan support for war in any case. But Obama's early opposition to it turbocharged his challenge to Hillary Clinton, who had voted in favor of the war to ensure her future political viability.

In the Barack Obama years, the issues that have gained traction have been those driven by movements willing to challenge the president and both parties: gays and lesbians, the Dreamers, now #BlackLivesMatter and the post-Ferguson demonstrations. But independent democratic movements are rare and always face forbidding odds. They are grounded in a moral indictment of what is socially accepted: workers no longer willing to tolerate the "dark Satanic mills"; black people unwilling to accept segregation; women objecting to their own separate sphere. All of the forces of ordered opinion—government, media, church, the conventional wisdom, the mainstream political parties—are arrayed to scorn their claims and marginalize their efforts.

These movements succeed only if they find ways to enlist ordinary people: to make them aware, to deepen their understanding, and to give them enough hope to act—often at great risk to themselves.

The Occupy Moment

Occupy put the inequality issue at the center of our politics. The question now is whether an independent movement will grow to drive it forward, challenging the conventional wisdom of both parties.

Exploitative arrangements of power and privilege do not, in themselves, produce mass political insurgencies. As Lawrence Goodwyn, the great historian of the populist era, wrote: "The simple fact of the matter is that, in ways that affect mind and body, times have been 'hard' for most humans throughout human history and for most of that period people have not been in rebellion."

POETRY ARCHIVE

June 14, 1947

The Fall of Rome

W.H. Auden

The piers are pummeled by the waves;
In a lonely field the rain
Lashes an abandoned train;
Outlaws fill the mountain caves.

Fantastic grow the evening gowns;
Agents of the Fisc pursue
Absconding tax-defaulters through
The sewers of provincial towns.

Private rites of magic send
The temple prostitutes to sleep;
All the literati keep
An imaginary friend.

Cerebrotonic Cato may
Extol the Ancient Disciplines,
But the muscle-bound Marines
Mutiny for food and pay.

Caesar's double-bed is warm
As an unimportant clerk
Writes I DO NOT LIKE MY WORK
On a pink official form.

Unendowed with wealth or pity,
Little birds with scarlet legs,
Sitting on their speckled eggs,
Eye each flu-infected city.

Altogether elsewhere, vast
Herds of reindeer move across
Miles and miles of golden moss,
Silently and very fast.

Goodwyn argues that democratic movements go through four stages: 1) the creation of an independent institution that can offer a new interpretation of reality; 2) the development of tactical means to attract people; 3) broad education of the citizenry; and 4) the formation of a political vehicle for driving the new ideas into the political debate.

Occupy broke through with a new interpretation of the reality around us. The "new inequality" isn't an act of nature. It didn't just happen; nor is it due to globalization and technology. The few are cleaning up because they have systematically rigged the rules to favor themselves. We aren't suffering the aches and pains of bad times; we are getting mugged.

The two parties wage furious debates about the color of the frosting, but the cake is already baked. Only independent citizens' movements have any chance of disrupting the kitchen.

OCCUPY'S TACTICAL MEANS—ASSERTING A grassroots control of public space—spread like wildfire across the country, but it couldn't be sustained. For a short time, Occupy did galvanize attention—and inspired millions. But the central challenge of a movement—an independent institution that can attract large numbers of people and broadly educate them—remains unfulfilled.

Movements must do more than merely shatter the cultural acceptance of a particular injustice as "normal" or "natural"; they must also propose bold alternatives that offer a way out. And they must engage their activists and the broader public in a battle of ideas with the defenders of the status quo. Today, politicians dress old ideas in populist garb. Jeb Bush decries inequality but prescribes the same old quack remedies that conservatives have peddled for years. Barack Obama offers a range of popular reforms, but also stumps for extending the corporate trade and tax strategies that have devastated working people.

As awareness grows, movements must offer a real hope that things can change. Joining a movement often entails facing mockery, scorn and ostracism as well as taking great risks. Few people are ready to make pointless sacrifices, to beat their heads against unmoving walls. Movements must offer more than solidarity; they must offer the hope that the time for change has come.

This requires a vehicle, an organizational form that sustains change, and a strategy for capturing attention. The populists of the 1880s formed cooperatives that offered some relief from the grip of the big banks. From there, they dispatched 40,000 lecturers to educate farmers and workers in small gatherings across the country about banks and monetary policy. That turned into a broad movement demanding fundamental reforms, and then into a populist political party that challenged the limits of both mainstream parties. Eventually, the Populist Party folded into the Democrats, even while influencing the platforms of all of the era's parties.

Today, Americans are much better educated than they were in the populist era. They are much more wired, connected in networks and associations. They have access to infinite information. But they also face fierce pressures in the struggle to stay afloat economically, often juggling three or four jobs, working longer hours with less security. They have little time or attention to devote to politics.

What is the vehicle that will drive an independent populist movement? Unions are under assault and represent an ever-smaller percentage of workers. Left parties are relics. The wealth of community organizations is focused mostly on local concerns and on service. Cooperatives and worker-controlled companies proliferate, but generally do little to challenge the current order.

Occupy and the post-Ferguson #BlackLivesMatter movement suggest new forms of organizing, grounded in communities of activists linked by social media, organizing creative swarms of protest and demonstration. Online organizations like MoveOn.org and CREDO engage millions of activists not simply in fundraising and petitions, but in protests and demonstrations on the ground. They also offer vital vehicles for political education and engagement. Groups like National People's Action seek to link local organizing with a broader political vision, direct action and increasingly independent electoral activity. If these are not yet a comprehensive answer, they may be the beginnings of one.

What is clear is that the populist moment has finally arrived. Extreme inequality impoverishes our people even as it corrupts our democracy. Increasingly, it is no longer accepted as natural or inevitable. Leaders of both parties acknowledge this, but are too compromised to propose solutions commensurate with the size of our problems. Doing so will require a fierce, independent citizens' movement prepared to confront the current order. We will win the change we need only if we succeed in building a new citizens' movement for a new time. **150th**

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Occupy Oakland protesters, November 2, 2011.

NOAH BERGER / AP

Weird Bedfellows

In their defense of "tradition" against the liberating potential of architecture, Prince Charles and Xi Jinping find unlikely common ground.

MICHAEL SORKIN

LATE LAST YEAR, CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING ROSE TO his bully pulpit to denounce the surfeit of "weird architecture" that has become so visible on the Chinese skyline, calling instead for an art that would "disseminate contemporary Chinese values, embody traditional Chinese culture and reflect [the] Chinese people's aesthetic pursuit." While there's something heartening about a national leader who actually cares about architecture, a wave of disquiet rapidly spread among both the Chinese and foreign designers (including yours truly) whose work might be implicated in its failure to embody the latest, unspecified version of the eternal verities. Whenever I hear that word "tradition," my trigger finger gets itchy; "weird" is one of the signatures of experiment and the new. But "weird" also signifies the surreal juxtapositions that are second nature in our televisual universe: not just the daffy thickets of solipsistic starchitecture that mar so much prime real estate, but also the commercials for hemorrhoid creams following an ISIS beheading on CNN.

Xi, however, obviously had this rash of "modern" buildings in mind—including the CCTV tower in Beijing (universally referred to as "the big underpants"), several much-publicized vertical doughnut-shaped structures built around the country, and doubtless some of Zaha Hadid's swoopier product. But is any of this weirder (or less Chinese) than the sublimely bizarre reproductions of Ye Olde English Villages and Die Kleindörfer in Deutschland that checker the suburbs of Shanghai, or the cherub-and-swag-encrusted apartment buildings that line every avenue? Xi remains mute on this particular kitsch. Besides, one must be wary of a China preoccupied with a "Chinese values" crisis—especially after the Cultural Revolution, when errors of preference and expression had consequences well beyond the aesthetic.

Architecture, notwithstanding its duty to serve, must always retain the liberatory possibility of going weird.

Speaking of the anxious defense of tradition, not long after Xi's pronunciamento, Prince Charles checked in with a virtually identical position: a ten-point manifesto on the future of the city that also called for the restoration of timeless harmonies to architecture and a return to royal family values in the form of… Olde English Villages for all! What can be the explanation for this weird case of parallel dis-invention? Is some geopolitical magma on the move between Beijing and Balmoral, coordinated from the Bilderberg by the Illuminati? I'm reminded of the discussions in my '60s groupuscule about so-called "convergence theory": the idea that industrialization and the permeabilities of the global village were causing two great systems—capitalism and communism—to meld into one, putting an end to the class warfare we were so valiantly waging in the back rooms of the West End Bar.

Convergence was surely Fukuyama *avant la lettre*, but whoever thought that when the end of architectural history came, it would arrive dressed as historicism? (I'm put in mind of the story about Nikita Khrushchev and Zhou Enlai meeting during the escalation of the Sino-Soviet split. Khrushchev proposed that the problem might be attributed to the fact that he was the son of a worker and Zhou the child of Mandarins, leaving them with little in common. Zhou allegedly replied that there was something they shared: they were both traitors to their class.) And to be sure, there's a bit of an imbalance in authority between Charles and Xi: the Chinese president has the People's Liberation Army behind him, not just the red-coated ghosts of the Hanoverian dynasty. Even so, the precision of the concurrence remains weird.

HOW TO UNPACK THIS? BOTH MEN ARE rising to defend against threats to something that feels unsettled and risky—an assault on their respective sources of authority and self-regard. Xi's crusade is widely described as a return to a quasi-Maoist orthodoxy. But what exactly does this mean for cities and the environment? Mao was deeply suspicious of the city: his rule saw urban depopulation and the suppression of city culture, and it promoted the most egregiously rigid forms of Soviet-style planning, including housing that was regimented and beyond austere. Mao also presided over the toxification of the environment and the wanton destruction of traditional forms of architecture, while celebrating the execrable art that was the special purview of Jiang Qing. (My affinity group went to see *Red Detachment of Women* and was deeply, *deeply* moved.)

Chinese leadership has a propensity for metaphor, and one of Xi's latest warned against those "eating the Communist Party's food and then smashing the Communist Party's cooking pots." This biting of the hand that feeds has surely been one of the strategies of Ai Weiwei, a particular thorn in Xi's side and that most adept negotiator of the political, the artistic, the commercial and the fairly weird—irony's terrain. Early last year, Ai displayed a series of Han-era clay pots that he had "defaced" with bright paint at a Miami gallery, part of a show that also featured photographic images of Ai in the act of dropping—and smashing—one of the 2,000-year-old jugs. A complication arose when a local artist, disturbed by the over-representation of foreign stars in local museums, smashed one of Ai's million-dollar urns. The artist claimed he was unaware of the "value" of the pots, assuming they'd been bought at a place like Home Depot. When the rejoinder to the ironist is simply to call his bluff, the critique of the critique trumps.

What's not clear about Xi, however, is exactly which of the "Communist Party's cooking pots" he seeks to defend. With so much of China's urban and architectural legacy trashed since 1949, the actual argument may not go beyond an advocacy of simulacra—a fig leaf for a truly monumental fuck-up, letting a thousand plastic flowers blossom. One particularly dreary possibility is a return to the ubiquitous "Big Roof" style, which represented the new, monumental national image in the early years of the revolution, a "modern architecture with Chinese characteristics." Indeed, this taste for tiled hats on official buildings remains widespread, one of the all-too-trivial reductions of the idea of the local against which many of the progenitors of those weird buildings will bridle. And right they are: it's one thing to find the uncritical imports anathema and to encourage homegrown forms of the creative, but quite another to offer this sort of synthetic kitsch as a remedy.

In the case of both Charles and Xi, it's difficult to discern the degree to which these struggles over symbolic form are meant to displace the relatively progressive ideas that each man periodically espouses. Most of Charles's manifesto concerns motherhood issues (indeed, it's virtually the same list he published twenty-six years ago in *A Vision of Britain*): no one denies the urgency of using our resources sustainably on a planet caroming down the road to environmental perdition. Xi, for his part, just signed on to a "breakthrough" emissions treaty with the United States and is clearly concerned with the foul state of his own nest. In my experience working on planning projects in China, everyone is talking the green talk (even if far fewer are walking the walk). The idea of a sustainable architecture with Chinese characteristics is a fine formulation, assuming those characteristics are authentically local (based on climate, topography, materiality, artistic invention and lively forms of social relations), not simply billboards for Han—or Communist Party—hegemony.

THE SAME IS TRUE FOR CHARLES: HIS ADVOCACY for the land and air, his sweet conversations with shrubbery, and his activities on behalf of preserving craft traditions all speak, shall we say, of noble impulses, however undercut they may be by the welter of images that his hapless flacks have been circulating of HRH in £2,000 bespoke Savile Row weeds, strolling concernedly through the rainforest, chatting with chickens or planting a scrawny tree in Jamaica, with Camilla standing by in dazzling white, protected from the absence of ozone by a tiny parasol—a wannabe cult of personality that lacks an actual personality as its object.

Nor is any real harm being done by Charles's advocacy for the charms of village architecture and organization, despite his failure to see this project not as the kind of self-initiated and informal growth begat by the original progenitors of these places, but instead as noblesse oblige. Charles convenes the focus groups, then hands the thing to Léon Krier to design.

But he truly wanders into the woods when he insists on more sacral truths. "Our age," Charles writes in *A Vision of Britain*, "is the first to have despised the principles of mathematical harmony and proportion and to have embarked on a course which glorifies the triumph of science and man's domination over nature. All this coincides with what can only be described as the denial of God's place in the scheme of things and the substitution of man's infallibility."

Here Charles meets Xi and his apparent anxiety over the abandonment of "scientific" socialism for baser appetites. Whether Xi's own compendium of artistic harmonies invokes feng shui (no Chinese developer puts up a McMansion without a consultation), the Little Red Book or some fresh construct of cultural nationalism (KFC with Chinese characteristics), both of these would-be taste-makers succumb to the same instrumental fallacy: the confusion of cause and effect. Their hope is that things will simply be as they appear.

The two also share, it would seem, an anxiety endemic to the unelected about insubordination, in which uniformity becomes the sign of acquiescence. But architecture, notwithstanding its duty to serve, must always retain the liberatory possibility of going weird. Both Xi and Charles want to shut down disagreement. What are they afraid of? **150th**

Game *Not* Over

Despite the Gamergate backlash, a new generation of activists is working to end the racial, sexual and gender stereotypes promoted by the video-game industry.

HELEN LEWIS

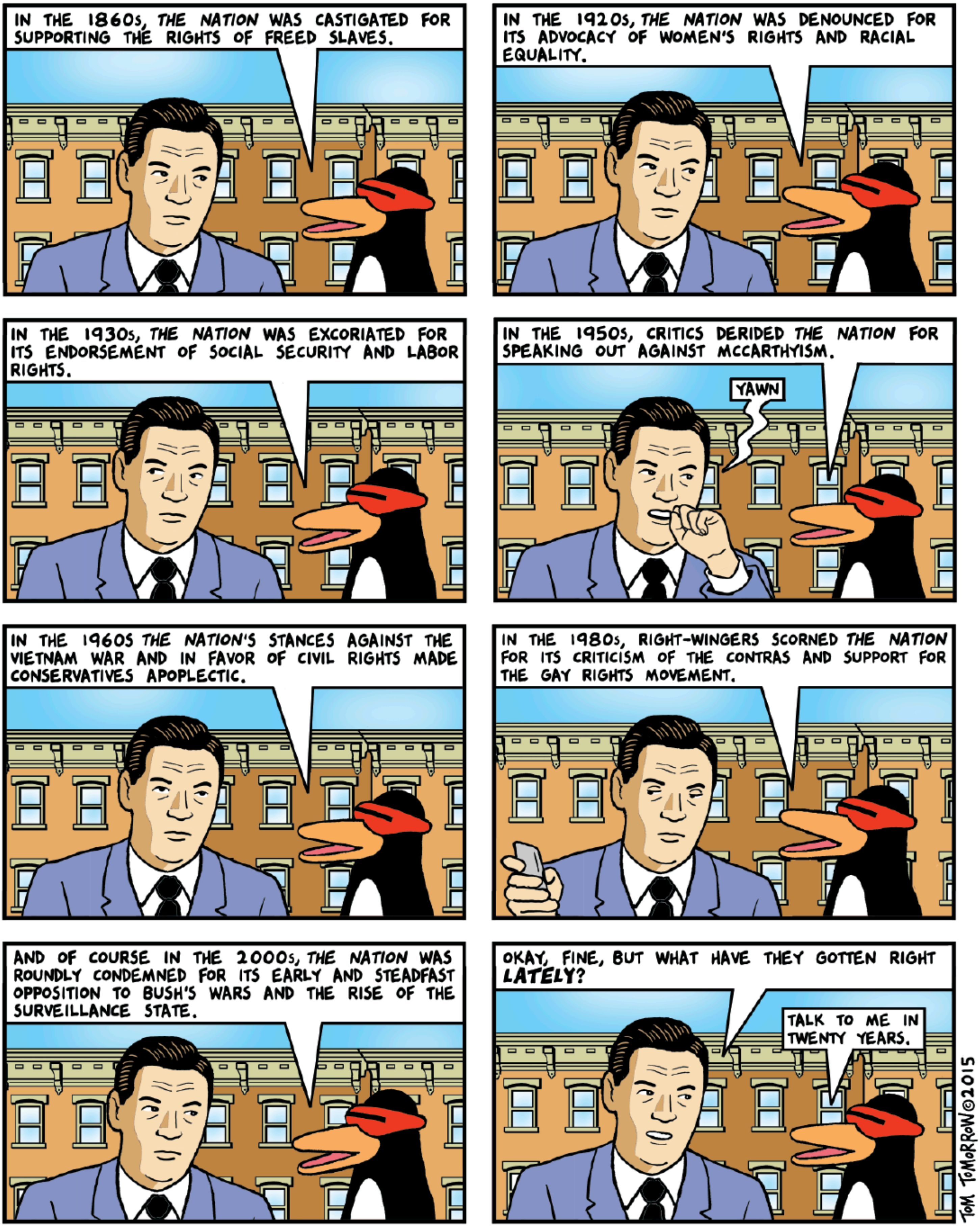
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM IN LONDON, AMID THE MUMMIES AND DISputed marbles, there is a delicate wooden board around a foot long, inlaid with limestone and lapis lazuli. Its design gives a hint to its purpose: twenty squares, covered in flowers and dots. One of the oldest surviving games in the world, the Royal Game of Ur seems to have been played a lot like modern-day checkers, with competitors racing across the board. It comes from southern Iraq and dates to around 2,600 BCE.

We know humans have played games for even longer than this: as the Dutch theorist Johan Huizinga put it in 1938, "Play is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing." He suggested that our species, *Homo sapiens* (the wise man), could be described with equal accuracy as *Homo ludens* (the playing man).

Huizinga's work also helps us to understand why play is far from a frivolous enterprise: because it is voluntary, and not necessary to survival, how we have fun says more about our species than how we work. "Play is superfluous…it is free, is in fact freedom," he writes. "Play is not 'ordinary' or 'real' life." In the 1860s, just before this magazine was founded, soldiers distracted themselves from the horrors of the Civil War with pastimes such as louse-racing or ten-pin bowling using cannon balls. The Civil War Trust records that "by the last years of battle, decks of cards were hard to come by in the Southern ranks," with Confederate soldiers reduced to taking them from Union prisoners and the bodies of the fallen. It's not hard to imagine the effect this had on morale.

Nonetheless, Anglo-American culture has long grappled with the idea that fun can be wholesome and, in fact, necessary to happiness rather than a debauched, degenerate luxury. Perhaps that's a hangover from the Puritans—in the seventeenth century, they were so hard on the idea of relaxation come Sunday that King James I was moved to issue a "Declaration of Sports," which specifically permitted "leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreation" on the Sabbath.

But taking games seriously, it turns out, is vital, both socially and politically: neuroscientists now acknowledge the role of imaginative play


IN THE 1860s, THE NATION WAS CASTIGATED FOR SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF FREED SLAVES.
IN THE 1920s, THE NATION WAS DENOUNCED FOR ITS ADVOCACY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND RACIAL EQUALITY.
IN THE 1930s, THE NATION WAS EXCORIATED FOR ITS ENDORSEMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND LABOR RIGHTS.
IN THE 1950s, CRITICS DERIDED THE NATION FOR SPEAKING OUT AGAINST MCCARTHYISM.
YAWN
IN THE 1960S THE NATION'S STANCES AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR AND IN FAVOR OF CIVIL RIGHTS MADE CONSERVATIVES APOPLECTIC.
IN THE 1980s, RIGHT-WINGERS SCORNED THE NATION FOR ITS CRITICISM OF THE CONTRAS AND SUPPORT FOR THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT.
AND OF COURSE IN THE 2000s, THE NATION WAS ROUNDLY CONDEMNED FOR ITS EARLY AND STEADFAST OPPOSITION TO BUSH'S WARS AND THE RISE OF THE SURVEILLANCE STATE.
OKAY, FINE, BUT WHAT HAVE THEY GOTTEN RIGHT LATELY?
TALK TO ME IN TWENTY YEARS.
TOM TOMORROW©2015

All the Right Enemies

TOM TOMORROW

in the neural development of children. Women, too, often miss out on leisure time. As Rebecca Abrams's 1997 feminist treatise *The Playful Self* asks: "A man has a God-given right to play football on a Sunday morning; a child cannot survive without two hours' frenetic activity in the park. What does the woman in their life do? Make the lunch." In 2014, Brigid Schulte's book on work/life balance, *Overwhelmed*, observed that throughout history, "women's time has been subjected to unpredictable interruptions, while men's ability to experience blocks of unbroken time has been protected. The 'good' secretary and the 'good' wife were the ones guarding it."

Strange as it may sound, these theoretical explorations of the concept of play provide the hidden background to 2014's biggest story in the video-game world: Gamergate.

This months-long social-media fiesta of harassment (of women in games) and hand-wringing (over the future direction of the medium) had its roots in one fundamental fact: men used to dominate gaming, back when gaming meant big console titles that demanded hours of continuous attention. But gaming has changed. Over the last decade, there has been an explosion in "casual" games—smartphone puzzles, say, or iPad time-wasters. Meanwhile, the big console manufacturers have decided that they are close to maxing out the hard-core demographic. The next step is to capture the family market; in the words of Microsoft staffers, "to own the living room." That means offering sports games, motion-sensitive exercise routines, and more creative titles like the blockbuster *Minecraft*, which appeals to everyone ages 3 to 93.

Casual games are popular with women too, perhaps precisely because they do not demand great blocks of unbroken time. They can be played while commuting, or watching the stove, or in those exhausted hours once the kids have gone to bed. Their popularity means that the gender split among video-game players is now close to even: the 2014 report by the Entertainment Software Association, the industry's trade body, says that "women over the age of 18 represent a significantly greater portion of the game-playing population (36 percent) than boys age 18 or younger (17 percent)."

In practice, this shifting market means fewer nerd-rage simulators and macho power fantasies, and more titles with interesting roles for women and minorities—and more stories in which the primary method of interacting with others is not shooting them or running them over. Behind Gamergate's apparent concern with "ethics in games journalism" was the fear that activists, gamers and critics were demanding an end to lazy stereotypes about race, gender and sexuality—as if having fewer games where you mow down faceless natives or bludgeon strippers to death meant banning fun itself.

Gamergate was right about one thing, though: many of the industry's leading figures are trying to expand the medium's appeal. In 2013, there was a spate of "dad games" like *BioShock Infinite*, *The Last of Us* and *The Walking Dead*, where instead of rescuing a princess from a castle or impressing a hot chick with your sniping abilities, the gamer was cast as a middle-aged man trying to protect a young girl. (Many writers speculated this was the result of game developers hitting middle age themselves—if so, look out for a spate of walker and cane simulators in about thirty years.)

The same year, *Tomb Raider* was rebooted—and Lara Croft got to wear trousers instead of hot pants. We now have war games that hate war (*Spec Ops: The Line*, *This War of Mine*), and games about mental health (*Depression Quest*), immigration (*Papers, Please*) and terminal illness (*That Dragon, Cancer*). One of my favorite games of 2014 was *80 Days*, a retelling of Phileas Fogg's journey around the world, which sought to shift the focus from Great White Men Making History to the ordinary people they meet along the way. It was written by Meg Jayanth, a woman of Indian descent living in London, who was unimpressed by the passive, objectified character of the Indian princess Aouda in Jules Verne's original novel. She has said that her first question was: "How can I write a game which is, ostensibly, about two Victorian white guys racing around the world for a bet, that nonetheless has space for Aouda as something other than a prize for the protagonist?" (If you have $4.99 and a smartphone, you can find out how well she did.)

Inevitably, as the games become more mature, game journalism has to grow up, too. One of Gamergate's demands was that reviews become more "objective," meaning that games should be assessed on their technical specifications rather than criticized, as books or films are, for their ideological assumptions and messages. ("*Ulysses*: great font, very readable; all pages printed in correct order. A solid 7/10.") An "objective" reviewer could then praise a game like *Grand Theft Auto V* for telling an interesting story—but never discuss that story's content.

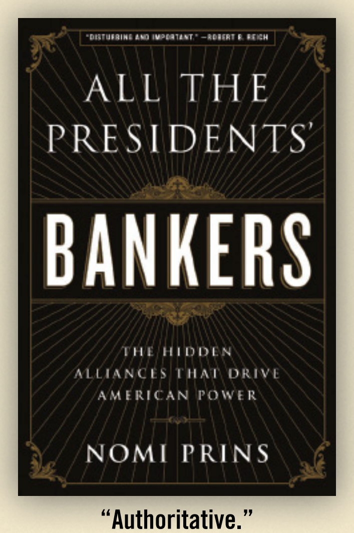
Games deserve better than that. They are both an $80-billion-per-year industry and an evolving, exciting artistic medium. They connect us to one another—despite the popular stereotype of a gamer "alone in his basement," many of today's blockbusters, such as *Destiny* and *Hearthstone*, are designed to be played with friends—and they also connect us to the long and winding thread of human history. If you Google "Royal Game of Ur" today, you can play the same game that entertained ancient Mesopotamians in the golden days of the Akkadian Empire. The only difference is that you'll win now with a click of the mouse, not a throw of the dice. **150th**

Games connect us to one another, and they also connect us to the long and winding thread of human history.

TESTIMONIALS

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

I am happy to convey my greetings to *The Nation* and its contributors and readers. It is very important that a magazine that stands for left-wing, progressive ideas has an audience in America. Today, such ideas are of particular relevance as a counterweight to concepts that, though they have different names in different countries, endorse and promote inequality and put vested interests above the interests of the people. My life, which spanned a large part of the twentieth century and continues into the new one, has made me a supporter of social democracy. I see social-democratic ideas as humankind's best hope for avoiding social and environmental catastrophes and building a safer, more just and more stable world order. I am confident that *The Nation* will continue its thought-provoking work, bringing together concerned individuals disturbed by the current state of the world and ready to act in order to change it for the better.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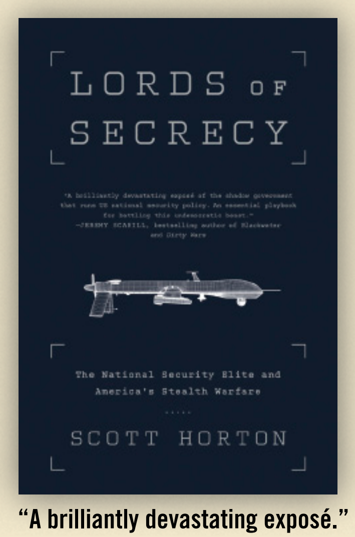
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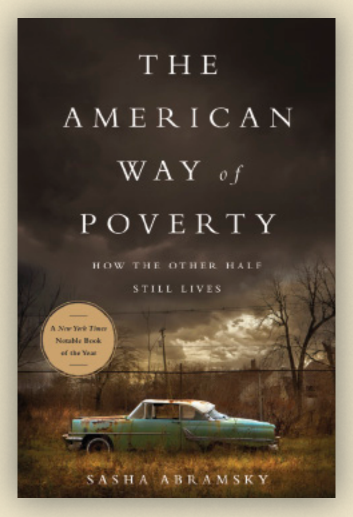
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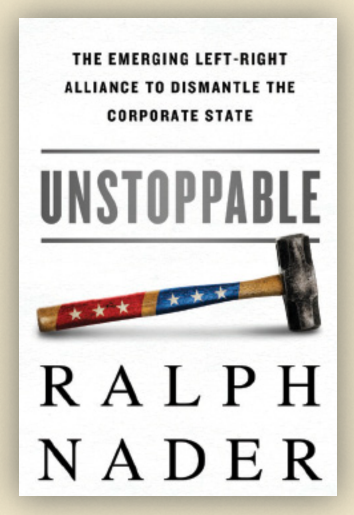
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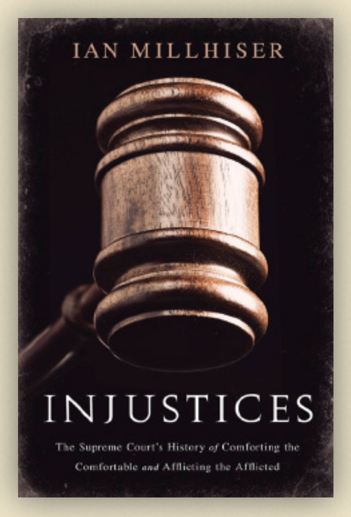
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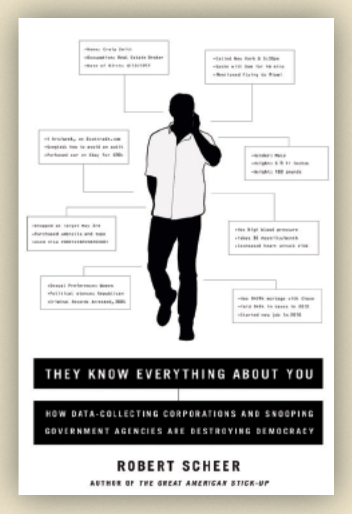
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“Why Do They Hate Us?”

It’s too easy to condemn the right’s populist attacks on Muslims—especially with so many left-wing atheists and liberal hawks joining the party.

MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI

Immediately following the January attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, the liberal hawk George Packer wrote a screed on *The New Yorker*’s website, proclaiming that “Islam today includes a substantial minority of believers who countenance…a degree of violence in the application of their convictions that is currently unique.” Also in January, *Dissent* posted “Islamism and the Left,” a long essay by the liberal philosopher Michael Walzer, composed before the Paris attacks, in which he wrote: “Islam today is a religion capable of inspiring large numbers of men and women, mostly men, to kill and die on its behalf.” And last October, self-proclaimed liberal Bill Maher told the guests on his HBO show *Real Time*, which included the writer and militant atheist Sam Harris, that “liberals need to stand up for liberal principles.” Harris agreed: “We have to be able to criticize bad ideas,” he said. “Islam at this moment is the mother lode of bad ideas.”

Oh, no—the liberals are gunning for “Islam.” Again.

Over the last several years, we’ve become accustomed to associating the anti-Islam crowd with conservative populism. An anti-Sharia movement pops up across the country in full nativist regalia; a loony Florida pastor with a cartoon mustache burns the Koran; well-organized demonstrators chant against a proposed Islamic Center in Manhattan (the “Ground Zero mosque” debacle); and Republican candidates pander to right-wing voters’ fears of Islam itself—remember when Herman Cain vowed not to appoint Muslims to his future cabinet? It all looks a little crazy from the left.

Our present liberal and conservative concordance on the evils of “Islam” should be troubling to the left, since it provides an ideological meeting ground for a continued “war on terror.”

The 2015 version of this anti-Islam rabble-rousing saw Steven Emerson, a so-called terrorism expert, proclaiming on Fox News that Birmingham—the second-most-populous city in Britain—had become a “no-go zone” for non-Muslims. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal repeated and later doubled down on this claim that no-go zones existed—even after it was made clear that Emerson’s precious factoid was pure fabrication.

The right’s Islamophobia is troubling—but, let’s be honest, often consoling to the left. Why? Because it not only demonstrates an allergy to things like evidence, but also brings clarity to the ways that right-wingers are instrumentalizing the discussion of Islam for their own political purposes. Jindal, a former Rhodes Scholar, must have known that what he repeated was a lie, but he repeated it nevertheless, because it’s a lie worth telling to shore up his base.

So what about the liberals? Of course, they too have sunk their teeth into anti-Islam polemics in the not-so-distant past. Writing in *The Nation* immediately after 9/11, Christopher Hitchens famously called the terrorist attacks “fascism with an Islamic face,” and Paul Berman quickly became an expert on Islam and politics in 2003 with the publication of his book *Terror and Liberalism*. But in the first decade of the “war on terror,” as Bush’s foreign policy destroyed rather than democratized Iraq, the liberal anti-Islam banner was carried not so much by liberal hawks like Packer as by fundamentalist atheists like Harris, Hitchens and Richard Dawkins.

Lately, however, their dinner party has gotten bigger: liberal atheists and liberal hawks are now eating at the same table, with Michael Moore seated next to Bill Maher. (Moore, an antiwar liberal, recently defended Maher for his views on Islam. When Christians do horrible things, he opined, “we speak up—loudly. So why not speak up when Muslims do it?” But that’s exactly the point: we blame individual Christians—not Christianity—for their actions, but Islam for the actions of Muslims.) This situation of liberal unity and liberal and conservative concordance on the evils of “Islam” should be troubling to the left, since it provides an ideological meeting ground for a continued “war on terror.” It’s also leading many Muslims to ask: “Why do they hate us?”

Today, it’s obvious that much of the world where Muslims live is mired in violence, but is Islam really the cause of that violence? Needless to say, simply because someone claims a violent act in the name of Islam doesn’t make it Islamic. Nor is there a single central authority among the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims to hold accountable for the actions of various Muslims; no one elected the *Charlie Hebdo* killers. But the idea that Muslims bear collective responsibility for individual acts is an old story, and it derives from the Orientalist trope that everything Muslims do anywhere is motivated solely by their faith in Islam. The serious study of other social phenomena has always required grappling with history, psychology, economics, the role of the state and more. But when it comes to Muslims, all of that is left to one side, and only our preconceived ideas of Islam remain.

Specifically, the problem with today’s liberal anti-Islam crowd is that they won’t countenance context or complexity. They justify their positions by arguing on the level of “ideas,” although their knowledge of Islamic theology and jurisprudence is sorely limited (few to none read Arabic), and their focus on “ideas” conveniently allows them to bracket off the messy history of America’s “war on terror.” These liberals argue that the problem is “Islam today” (not “Islam” per se), but then they deliberately avoid thinking about what makes today different from yesterday. Wouldn’t such a consideration mean reckoning with the various ways that the “war on terror” feeds the creation of the very terrorism it is supposed to eliminate?

Such self-delusion is what makes the current outburst of liberal anti-Islamic philosophizing especially distressing, though it illustrates a useful distinction between Orientalist and Islamophobic ways of thinking. The anti-Islam positions of liberals, like those of conservatives, are instrumentalizing hostile attitudes toward Muslims into policy. But the anti-Islam positions offered up by conservatives today mostly serve a domestic

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(sometimes evangelical) agenda that relies on a fear of the Muslim "other" to prove that a mythic America is in danger of slipping away. With liberals, it's different: their Orientalism at this moment works largely to continue and possibly expand the "war on terror" overseas. Packer writes that France must have a "renewed debate" regarding its Muslim citizens after the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, but that in "other places"—presumably places peopled with Muslim "others"—"the responses have to be different, with higher levels of counter-violence."

The "war on terror" has created a self-serving political culture that allows us to silently evade our national responsibility while loudly projecting collective blame onto abstract "others."

But surely the profound failures of the "war on terror" should be evident to Packer and to anyone else looking. Why, then, is it so hard to understand that the violence of the "war on terror" produces yet more violence? Over the last fourteen years, the number of victims of global terrorism has mushroomed fivefold, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace, with the largest increase occurring between 2012 and 2013. While not every act of terrorism is a direct result of America's "war on terror," this latest war is by any reasonable measure an unmitigated disaster, spreading to ever more countries and spiraling out of control.

Blind confidence by liberals and conservatives alike in the stated purposes of the "war on terror" has also enabled successive administrations to deliberately obfuscate or even withhold uncomfortable realities from an American public that doesn't want to hear them anyway. During the same tragic week of the *Charlie Hebdo* killings, while Americans were celebrating the virtues of free speech, the ACLU was filing a brief to compel the Obama administration to release thousands of images of the US military's abuse of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan that the government doesn't want you (or anyone else) to see.

This sort of structural turning away from America's own actions in this war is not limited to images. When the Associated Press caught the New York Police Department spying on virtually every element of Muslim life in the tristate area, the Center for Constitutional Rights and others filed suit against the city of New York—but in February 2014, the court dismissed the case. What's interesting is how: in his summary opinion, Judge William Martini did not chastise the NYPD for its actions; in fact, he encouraged the police. He did, however, admonish the Associated Press for revealing this noxious program and its details.

The same logic of blaming the messenger pervades the discussion of the Senate report on CIA torture: more than half of the American public believes the executive summary should not have been released, and the actual report remains classified. When it comes to the "war on terror," we work hard to keep the truth from ourselves.

And within that report, we can finally read how Abu Zubaydah, the CIA's first detainee in that war, was deprived of sleep for days on end; denied necessary medical care (resulting in the loss of an eye); confined in a coffin-size box for 266 hours, as well as in a tiny box only twenty-one inches wide by thirty inches long for nearly thirty hours; and waterboarded at least eighty-three times. We were told by the government that this harsh treatment was necessary because CIA interrogators suspected that Abu Zubaydah had information about another terrorist attack planned in the United States. But the Senate report reveals a very different truth: the CIA tortured Abu Zubaydah despite the fact that he was already cooperating. Indeed, their objective was, according to an internal cable, "to achieve a high degree of confidence" that Abu Zubaydah was "not holding back actionable information concerning threats to the United States beyond that which he has already provided"—that is, *prior* to being subjected to brutal treatment. In other words, the CIA tortured him to make sure he had nothing more to say. If he spoke, the torture worked; if he was silent, the torture worked. The agency jimmied up a system in which the torture didn't need to produce anything—least of all actionable intelligence—to be considered a success.

We can take this terrible example as a metaphor for the whole "war on terror," which has created a self-serving political culture that allows us to silently evade our national responsibility while loudly projecting collective blame onto abstract "others." If we want a better, saner, more just future, then the "war on terror" must come to an end—and for that to happen, we must become more critical and discerning about the full spectrum of horrors that have occurred (and are still taking place) during this war. "It is part of the mechanism of domination to forbid recognition of the suffering it produces," the German philosopher Theodor Adorno wrote. Only when we face up to our delusions and actions and stop torturing others into silence will we be able to keep ourselves out of the darkness. **150th**

Michael Moore for President

If nominated, I will run. If elected, I will serve.

MICHAEL MOORE

If my grandfather were alive today, he'd be about 150 years old. I know what you're thinking: with my youthful looks, neither the math nor the biology of that sentence makes any sense. But it's the truth, it's not worth dissecting, so let's move on.

The Nation, too, is 150 years old. As I am only two generations removed from the Civil War era, and thus able to provide some not-too-distant context, the editors have asked me to write a critique of the magazine on this occasion. I have thought about it and decided that I have no critique to offer. My simple advice: *Nation*, keep doing what you're doing. Don't change. Everything's fine. Thank you for 150 years of telling the truth.

Instead of providing the requested critique, I would, if you don't mind, like to offer something else. I'd like to announce, in the pages of this historic issue of this magnificent magazine, the formation of a committee that will study the possibility of an exploratory committee to assess the potential of a Michael Moore candidacy for the presidency of the United States in 2016. In other words, I'm not officially declaring my intention to run. I'm just saying, *should*

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I decide to throw my ball cap into the ring, this is what I would propose to do if elected:

1. ONE CHARGE CORD! I will sign an edict declaring that there will be only *one* charge cord for *all* brands of *all* electronic devices—phones, computers, tablets, music devices, cameras and everything else. Just like all electrical appliances and items have used the same two-prong cord that plugs into the same two-hole outlet for the past 100 years, so too shall there be only one charge cord that will plug into the same hole of every digital device from this day on. I think this plank alone can get me elected, but let me offer a few more promises.

2. I will sign legislation that will lower the voting age to 16. A teenager who can die for her/his country at 18 should have a say in just who it is that will be sending them off to war.

3. If there is a call for war, and if we are to invade another nation, I will declare as commander in chief that the first to be sent into combat must be the conscripted adult offspring of all members of Congress, the president and the president's cabinet (and then, in order, the children of the CEOs of the *Fortune* 500, all military contractors and the top media executives). This should reduce the number of wars considerably.

4. I will make available free HBO for everyone.

5. I will forgive all student debt. We'll go back to a system of work-study, grants, scholarships and minimal, interest-free loans. College in America, as in many other countries, should essentially be free.

6. I'll reduce the Pentagon's budget by 75 percent. That will pay for the above free college and most of my ideas that will follow. We will still have one of the biggest militaries in the world and the ability to blow it up many times over—just not as many times as before.

7. All Americans will get the same free health plans that members of Congress have access to.

8. That universal health plan will include free mental and free dental. If most Americans could get their teeth and head fixed when needed, the cost (and need) of seeing a medical doctor will decrease.

9. The wealthy will pay the same percentage in Social Security tax on their *entire* income as every middle-class person does. Right now, those who earn any income over $118,500 pay *zero* Social Security tax on whatever they make over that sum. Meanwhile, every working person who earns under $118,500 these days pays the full Social Security tax on their entire income. If the rich were forced to pay Social Security tax on *all* that they earn, there would be enough money in the Social Security trust fund to last us many more decades—perhaps close to the next century.

10. We will return to the income-tax rates that existed when that great Republican Gerald Ford was president. That's all. No need to take it back to the Eisenhower days, when the wealthy paid more than 90 percent in income tax. Just take me to the last Republican before Reagan, when the elites paid around 70 percent. That, too, will help to fund everything here on my list.

I'll reduce the Pentagon's budget by 75 percent. We will still have the ability to blow the world up many times over—just not as many times as before.

11. Bullet trains. 'Nuff said.

12. A ban on high-fructose corn syrup. This cheap "poison" (lawyers made me insert the quote marks) is hard to find in the rest of the civilized world for a variety of reasons, which might be why nearly all of these countries have lower diabetes rates than the United States.

13. Anyone caught using their mobile device inside a movie theater will be subjected to enhanced "rectal rehydration" (thank you, CIA, for that suggestion!).

14. When in doubt, do what the Canadians do: a near-ban on handguns and semi-automatic weapons. An eight-week election season. A return to the paper ballot. No pharmaceutical ads on TV. Strict banking and financial regulations. A refusal to eliminate civil liberties after the terrorists attack. Trade with Cuba. And reduce the number of downs in football to three.

15. All schools will return to teaching civics class. (Most schools these days don't.) If young people are going to vote at 16, they should know how it all works and what they can do to rock the vote—or the boat.

16. A moment of Zen: All students shall learn cursive writing. Don't take away the one thing that we can all do that is unique to each of us. It's our creative fingerprint. We are not machines. To write longhand allows our soul to find its way out and be seen as ours and only ours. The world is a cold and harsh enough place as it is. Why take this little personal human piece away from us? Who doesn't like getting a handwritten note?

17. We will not back theocracies. You know who you are. Stop it, and stop your harmful, inhuman ways. And we can start with ourselves. After thirty-five years of having to follow laws instigated by the Christian right in this country, I've had it. To do my part, as president, I will gay-marry anyone who wants to get married.

18. All Americans shall have a mandatory four-week paid vacation. (Note to employers: I will send you the studies that show such laws increase productivity. People do better work when happy and rested.)

19. Prisons will not be owned or run by private corporations; they will be run by the public for its own safety. They will no longer be used as places of punishment but rather as training and rehab centers. They will not exist to incarcerate the races or ethnic groups who have no power. Nonviolent people will not be locked up. If they have stolen, they will make restitution. Yes, that means you, corporate criminals.

20. As Americans, we will seek to be kind—to each other, to the world, and to ourselves. As the president, I will be the first to set that example. I will place education and enlightenment at the top of every agenda, and the elimination of ignorance as my worthy goal. Ignorance leads to fear, fear leads to hate, and hate leads to violence. That has been the American equation for too long. The road to its end begins with my election.

Now let's go watch some Canadian football on HBO. **150th**

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Toward a Third Reconstruction

FROM ABOLITION TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND BEYOND

A conversation on The Nation, *race and history at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture with Eric Foner, Darryl Pinckney, Mychal Denzel Smith, Isabel Wilkerson and Patricia J. Williams.*

INTRODUCTION BY KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL
MODERATED BY KHALIL GIBRAN MUHAMMAD

Muhammad: Welcome to this very special occasion. I think that it is also fitting to note that this is the eighty-sixth birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I'd like to introduce the editor and publisher of *The Nation*. I consider her a friend.

Vanden Heuvel: Thank you, Khalil. *The Nation* was started by a group of abolitionists committed to reporting on, and participating in, this country's struggles to live up to its founding creed. After the Civil War, the challenge was to summon into existence a new, more humane and more democratic nation.

The Nation inherited the subscription list of William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, which he founded with the famous warning: "I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch and I WILL BE HEARD." Garrison's son was the magazine's first literary editor; his grandson, Oswald Garrison Villard, joined W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida Wells to help found the NAACP in 1909, and created the modern *Nation* as we know it when he took the helm in 1918.

But it was the great Carey McWilliams who got in touch with Dr. King. From 1961 to 1966, King sent long annual reports to *The Nation* on the state of the civil-rights movement. His final dispatch, "The Last Steep Ascent," focused on the importance of turning the movement toward economic justice and is, tragically, as relevant today as it was forty-nine years ago.

***Selma* reminds us of how we thought of voting as the answer, the cure. That turned out not entirely to be the case.**

THE LIBERATOR

Muhammad: In July 1865, editor E.L. Godkin wrote in a letter: "And the tranquility which still reigns in the city, under the circumstances I confess amazes me." Eric Foner, what exactly did he mean?

Foner: New York is a funny place—as we all know. New York before the Civil War had been very closely tied into the slave South: the cotton trade, the merchants, the carpetbaggers. Godkin is not involved in that, but he is talking about an atmosphere in New York that they want. The Civil War is over. Yes. The North has won. Wonderful. Slavery is abolished. Wonderful. But now it's time to get back to business.

Muhammad: I also thought, Darryl, that you might want to weigh in on the relationship of democracy and its dependence on the federal government. You've written about this in a recent book, *Blackballed: The Black Vote and US Democracy*.

Pinckney: Black people are not brought up to believe in the cyclical view of history. And so it is rather depressing how many themes from 1865 continue to demand our attention. Black people have always looked to the federal government for protection against states' rights. But conservative opposition to expansion of the franchise has remained the same as well, usually having to do with blacks as poor people: we don't have a stake in the democracy or, having been a degraded people, [we] aren't yet mature enough to participate in the democracy. And all of that is still underlying the voter suppression going on today. The release of the film *Selma* reminds us of how, not so long ago, we thought of voting as the answer, as the cure. And that turned out not entirely to be the case.

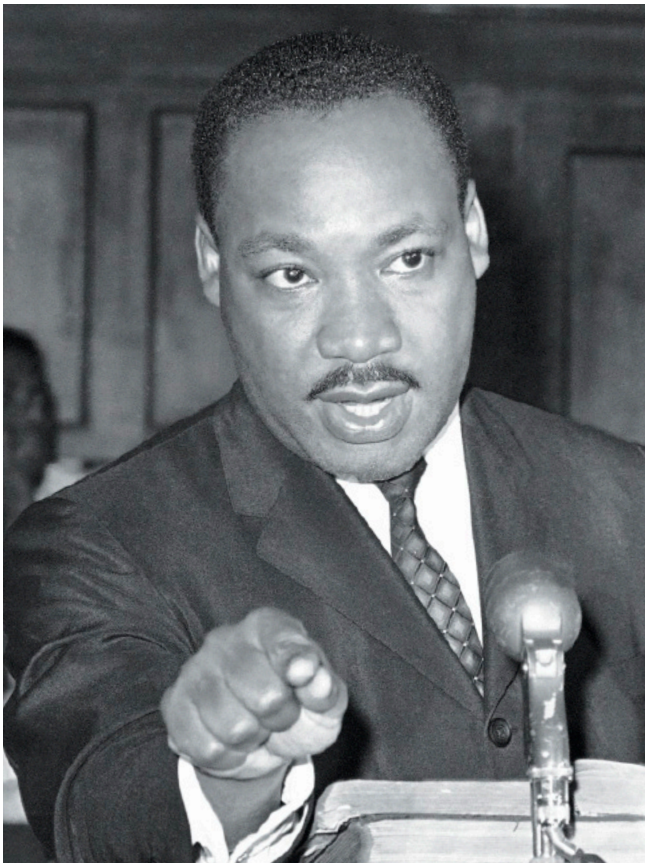
Muhammad: I wonder, Patricia, if you could talk about American exceptionalism?

Williams: Our sense of the good is always in the future. And there's a directionality to it that goes back, I guess, to the Puritan jeremiads, or *Pilgrim's Progress*, that we are proceeding toward this celestial city. That is a kind of optimism that is uniquely American, if not naïve. But it is deep in our cultural character.

At the same time, the degree to which words like "agitation" repeat and repeat…. The persistence, the reinvention, of race, of racism and its problems, really came to me in the word "agitation." I live in Boston these days, and the week after Ferguson, everybody in my neighborhood received a message from the Boston Police Department that if you were going to demonstrate, to do so responsibly—but also be aware of outside agitators. Now, certainly by one metric, everyone in Boston is an outside agitator. The language of agitation and the way in which it has devolved to be a permanent category of outside troublemaker—rather than, say, a politically progressive provocateur—is fascinating to me.

Muhammad: And the constant redrawing of boundaries—not just citizenship, but of who is part of the social contract…

Williams: But also who was human in all of this. Because this was not just a struggle for citizenship; it was a struggle from chattel, from the status of being cattle or animal to being human. [Fifty years after slavery,] the American Eugenics Society was investing more and more of its power in public discourse, even as the question of humanity was being sidelined by the growing push for Jim Crow. And I do worry that much of that "scientific language" is re-erupting [today] in the way in which we are reconstructing race as a biological category. For example, on PBS, [Henry Louis] Gates told Stephen Colbert that he was 100 percent white. This is very, very troubling—and, again, it speaks to the persistence of these scientistic notions of race.



AP

AN AMERICAN IN CUBA

NATION

LAST STEEP ASCENT

The Draft Under Fire

The Timid Political Will

THE SCRUTABLE EAST

REVIEWED BY

MARCH 14, 1966

Everything that had been an insult that black people were supposed to be—emotional, musical, lazy, feminine, oversexed—became virtues.

Muhammad: Langston Hughes was a frequent visitor to the library and a friend of Arturo Schomburg. His ashes are part of our Langston Hughes Atrium just beyond this auditorium, so he is always with us. But [in 1926,] he writes one of the most controversial essays of his career [for *The Nation*]: "One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, 'I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet,' meaning, I believe, 'I want to write like a white poet'; meaning subconsciously, 'I would like to be white.' This is the mountain standing in the way of any great Negro art in America, this urge within the race toward whiteness."

At the time, George Schuyler had written "The Negro-Art Hokum," a put-down of the celebrations of blackness that were all the rage in Harlem. Is it too much to suggest that this moment in the Harlem Renaissance shares much of the enthusiasm of the early Obama era? Any thoughts about "post-blackness"—then or now?

Smith: When the police are post-black, *I'll* be post-black.

Pinckney: That exchange between Schuyler and Hughes in *The Nation* in 1926 was really important. Schuyler's afraid of racial difference—because it has been used to define blacks as inferior. He wants to believe in color-blindness: everyone is American, there's no essential difference. And Langston Hughes embraces the difference and correctly identifies the class problem, because the possibilities of assimilation for the middle class didn't exist for the black working class back then.

But the larger thing going on was that World War I was such a slaughter that the West lost faith in this kind of rationalistic, mechanistic thinking. And everything that had been an insult that black people were supposed to be—emotional, musical, lazy, feminine, oversexed—all of these things became virtues. In the Harlem Renaissance, they turned all of these negative images into positive ones. Whites wanted these things as well.

When we talk about "post-racial," we're actually going through another shift in control of the terms. In Ferguson, I was very struck by the young leaders on the streets. They weren't afraid to say they were gay. This is so far from the days of Bayard Rustin fifty years ago. But we're also very far from those macho postures that black people needed in order to take on or confront white authority. And once again, these changing definitions make it possible for whites to join, to become allies.

Williams: I heard recently a reporter describe the Senegalese man who was part of this horrible event [the *Charlie Hebdo* attack] in Paris, Amedy Coulibaly, and he referred to him as "African-American," which was really significant to me. It made me think of how we are not only *not* post-racial, we are *pan*-racial.

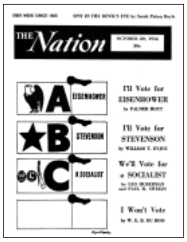
We are pan-racial in a way that is also fed by the global security state, in which profiling has become an international enterprise that is very much informed by American categories. This has become a globally exported set of racial categories. And this is not a good recipe, when we all become "African-Americans" in this sense.

Muhammad: Isabel Wilkerson, you recently wrote an essay describing the Jim Crow South as the "largest slum in the world."

Wilkerson: I think that this defection—of 6 million black Southerners from the Jim Crow regime—was misunderstood from the start. I'm so struck by the people who were interviewed around World War I by the Chicago Race Commission. They asked people why they had left and what had they hoped to find in the North. And over and over again, they said: "Freedom." In one way or another, "freedom."

We were decades past *Plessy v. Ferguson* [the 1896 Supreme Court decision upholding racial segregation], decades into a caste system known as Jim Crow. Jim Crow—we think of water fountains and restrooms. But Jim Crow meant that from the moment you woke up until the moment you went to sleep, a person had to be exquisitely aware of exactly what they could and could not do, based primarily on what they looked like. Every four days in the South, an African-American was lynched for some perceived breach of that caste system. And usually the presumed infractions were mundane, in the same way that we look at things that end up being a part of the killings that we're hearing about now.

One of the most common reasons for lynching was the accusation of acting like a white person—not stepping off the sidewalk fast enough, or walking into the wrong door. It meant a nerve-jangling way to live, and that is what the people were fleeing. They were seeking political asylum within the borders of their own country. What happened to them when they arrived?



THE Nation

A EISENHOWER

B STEVENSON

C A SOCIALIST

I'll Vote for EISENHOWER

I'll Vote for STEVENSON

We'll Vote for a SOCIALIST

I Won't Vote

OCTOBER 20, 1956

They asked people why they had left and what had they hoped to find in the North. They said: "Freedom."

President Barack Obama is sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts on January 21, 2013.

SCOTT ANDREWS / AP

Muhammad: Du Bois publishes an article in *The Nation* in late October of 1956: "I believe that democracy has so far disappeared in the United States that 'no two evils' exist. There is but one evil party, with two names." Voting would not have saved Michael Brown. But I am always uncomfortable with the kind of critique that Du Bois makes about the ballot box.

Smith: I think his cynicism is well-placed in that, as much progress is constantly being made, black people are continually left out of it. And it very much echoes the feelings of so many people on the ground right now. But it also points to the importance of grassroots organizing, so that we can push our politicians to be the politicians that we need and want in office. Whatever the limitations of the Obama presidency, part of the reason that he is elected the first time around is the antiwar movement pushing for an antiwar candidate. We have to think of these things in tandem. Voting can be a powerful tool if you're using it in the context of a social movement that pushes the right type of people to run for office.

Pinckney: The problem with fatalism in the black community is that it always makes sure that no one can say you are a fool. The thing about pessimism is that nobody can put anything over on you. You always knew it was going to fuck up in the end.

Muhammad: In "The Last Steep Ascent," [King] writes: "the Negro freedom movement has a policy and a program.... The lag is appearing in the white community, which now inclines toward détente, hoping to rest upon past laurels." It is really remarkable to hear his evolving relationship to social transformation. And his unwillingness—*unwillingness*—to pronounce this work finished. Is this a King channeling our current moment?

Williams: We are talking about the hagiography of black leaders. And that is a general question of representation, whether it is in film or whether it is about Barack Obama right now. Obama was elected in part because he became a cipher onto which people projected all of these images—that he was Malcolm X, that he was MLK. He was all things to all people—a big floating signifier. In much the same way, I think Martin Luther King has been resurrected as this color-blind conservative god to some. And I keep wondering how he would have been represented if he *had* survived. If he were 80 or 90 years old, if he had pressed his agenda, would he be heroic?

A Report From Occupied Territory

JULY 11, 1966

Wilkerson: When you speak of the representation of a Martin Luther King or a Rosa Parks—this idea that they have to be perfect, and that they have to be presented as perfect, is also a form of dehumanization.

Foner: I wish they would just retire his speech at the Lincoln Memorial for a while. One speech, with one or two sentences out of it, is all you hear. The guy who was calling for economic justice, the guy who was calling for an end to the war and an end to the whole military-industrial concept in this country—you never hear about that on Martin Luther King Day. The civil-rights movement, which was very disruptive and very unpopular with very many people as it was happening, has been turned into this onward-and-upward journey. I think King would be appalled to see how he is actually represented nowadays on Martin Luther King Day.

We've been in a backlash for so long that we don't even recognize that, for once, the momentum is with us again.

Pinckney: This is the whole problem of the United States: history is a great inconvenience. So is the present, which is why everybody is so disappointed with Obama.

Muhammad: He certainly played to that. It wasn't an accident. He says in that second inaugural, he goes from Seneca Falls—just as a refrain—to Selma, to Stonewall. And that's history, right?

Pinckney: It matters that Obama mentioned women's rights, civil rights and gay rights as a centrist politician. It's reconfiguring the mainstream. I am not so worried about him not being as left as I am, because just as they can't make Obama lose his cool, they can't shove him from the middle ground. As long as he occupies the center, the Republicans have to be right-wing. I mean, I know there is a lot going on, and yet where are the black neocons who used to drive us crazy? Where are all those Jewish neocons who used to drive us crazy? We've been in a backlash for so long that we don't even recognize that, for once, the momentum is with us again. This is what all of this means with Ferguson.

Muhammad: I couldn't help but think about the resonance of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Here is James Baldwin in *The Nation* talking about police occupation.

Smith: Yeah, and in reading this essay I became very angry, because it was published in 1966 and James Baldwin was talking about stop-and-frisk! Not the *idea* of stop-and-frisk; he is literally using the language "stop and frisk." So what I would like, then, is if we can look at history and say: "This is the job of the police. The job of the police is repression: it is the policing of the black body, it is destruction of the black body, and it is an insurance that black people stay in their place." Let's not valorize policing. It is about certain people's public safety—and what they fear as a threat is black people.

Muhammad: So a final question: What does abolition/democracy look like in the Third Reconstruction?

Pinckney: There is not going to be a Third Reconstruction with a Congress like this one. If they are spending millions of dollars not just to convince you to vote for their guy, but to suppress your vote, it must mean the vote matters. And so now I consider the vote a radical act. I remember as a student not feeling that way, but now I do. No one gives you power—you have to take it, you have to find it, you have to make it yourself.

Williams: It is going to have to be a global movement. And it is going to have to be a movement that takes into account the enormous ecological and technological transformation that we are undergoing.

Foner: I actually like the term "Third Reconstruction," because it gets us thinking about moments in the past where there was a combination of grassroots radicalism and political leadership. You know, in the 1830s, Theodore Weld, the great abolitionist orator, said: "I'm not putting forward a plan for abolition. The issue is a commitment to change. Once the commitment to change occurs, then it is the job of politicians to put it into effect. Our job is to make them understand that change is necessary."

Wilkerson: There is such a chasm in our country between people of conscience who can see the injustice that surrounds us, and those who would prefer to be blind. And that is a substantial segment of our population. What does it matter, then, if we have something written but people refuse to acknowledge it? We have seen what can happen to laws that we thought were set in granite—say, the Voting Rights Act. The law is important. It is essential. But if hearts don't change, then even the laws are in danger.

Smith: What you're saying is that the impetus for change is the changing of consciousness. And how do you do that? Well, you have to make people uncomfortable, and they have to see the situation as untenable. What is so brilliant about this current movement is that, from shutting down the highways to going into the shopping malls to disrupting brunch, these young people are saying that normal is killing us, and that normal will not stand. You have to be uncomfortable with normal now.

This forum has been edited and condensed. You can find the full session at TheNation.com/third-reconstruction. **150th**

THE NATION: A BIOGRAPHY

1965-2015

A forum for debate between radicals and liberals in an age of austerity, surveillance and endless war, The Nation *has long had one foot inside the establishment and one outside it.*

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

By 1978, the term "liberal" had acquired all sorts of baggage, from Hubert Humphrey's timorous silence over the Vietnam War to the liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller's brutal response to a revolt by inmates at Attica Correctional Facility. For the generation that came of age in the 1960s, "liberal" just didn't cut it. And by his own admission, Victor Navasky was a liberal.

But like every new editor, Navasky wanted to shake things up. He and publisher Hamilton Fish asked graphic legends Milton Glaser and Walter Bernard to redesign the magazine. And when *New Republic* owner/editor Martin Peretz responded to a story in *The New York Times* reporting that a "feud" had developed between the two liberal journals following *The New Republic*'s shift "to the right" with a letter insisting "We have no feud with that magazine. Its readership is too tiny, its contents too reflexively *gauchiste* to trouble with," Fish and Navasky took out a tiny classified ad on the bottom of the *Times* front page. It read: "Martin Peretz, please come home. All is forgiven. *The Nation*—still unfashionably liberal after all these years."

So which was it: liberal or radical? Navasky, who confirmed his admiration for *The Nation* and what he describes as a "reverence for Carey McWilliams" reading through back issues related to the Hollywood blacklist (the subject of the book he was then writing, *Naming Names*), says that when he arrived at his new office, "I did not have an ideological program I intended to enforce. But I did think that debates within *The Nation* would not be between the Democrats and the Republicans, but between the radicals and the liberals."

In 1982, Navasky persuaded Andrew Kopkind to join *The Nation*. Simply by being there, and being who he was—gay, deeply radical, charismatic, politically sophisticated—Kopkind pulled *The Nation*'s center of gravity further to the left. A magazine that had been more comfortable with the class-oriented analysis of the white male left was slowly coming to realize, and embrace, the importance of women's liberation, gay liberation and what was sometimes denigrated as "identity politics."

While Navasky saw *The Nation* as committed, he sought to "provide a home for dissent and dissenters."

Navasky's own political compass had its fixed points. In a memo to publisher James Storrow, he'd confessed to "a simplistic, absolutist view of the First Amendment," said he was an "integrationist" on race who nonetheless thought *The Nation* "an appropriate forum for black nationalist…views," remained wary of multinational corporations, and had "a profound presumption in favor of disarmament over armament" and was "paranoid about nuclear weapons." He was, he allowed, soft on "old World Federalists," a privacy fanatic who worried about new technology and believed "all forms of electronic eavesdropping ought to be banned." He admitted to "an enduring sympathy for socialist experiments, preferably decentralized, and keep looking for one that works."

Though clearly left of center, the list is as notable for what it does not mention—economic policy, energy policy, women's rights, communism, imperialism, the environment, trade unions, Cuba—as what it does. While he obviously saw *The Nation* as committed, and made no pretense of impartiality or objectivity, Navasky's letter ended on a note of skepticism. What made *The Nation* unique, he said, was its willingness "to question the conventional wisdom, to be suspicious of all orthodoxies, to provide a home for dissent and dissenters."

Beginning in 1984, one of the most prominent dissenters was columnist Alexander Cockburn, who, in the long, still-to-be-written history of *Nation* feuds, would surely occupy pride of place. Yet his work was also a constant advertisement for the freedom the magazine offered its contributors—which, for writers who needed it, was worth more than any fee.

With Cockburn, Christopher Hitchens and Andrew Kopkind up front, and Arthur Danto, Edward Said and Katha Pollitt in the back, *The Nation* regained a reputation for literary distinction. Meanwhile, just as Navasky and Fish projected, circulation rose almost immediately to 32,000 and then steadily to 90,000. Advertising picked up as well, though of course most major corporations were leery of subsidizing a journal that went out of its way to attack their interests.

PERHAPS THE MOST SURPRISING THING ABOUT Navasky's decision, in 1995, to turn the *Nation* editor's chair over to 35-year-old Katrina vanden Heuvel was how uncontroversial that choice was at a magazine whose writers often seemed at war with one another—and whose readers, as Milton Glaser once observed, regarded even the introduction of color as "using the tools of the enemy." But Navasky had no doubts. "She seemed to me to have the character, values, and not least the temperament for the job," Navasky wrote in his memoir, *A Matter of Opinion* (2005), "and to understand that, as Robert Borosage once put it, '*The Nation* walks on two legs—one inside the establishment and one outside.' I knew that unlike anyone else in the office…she would not cause factional grumbling."

OCTOBER 8, 2001
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It would be vanden Heuvel's task as editor to resist the siren song of consensus and the stampede to join Bush's bandwagon.

It is hard to imagine the 1996 special issue on "The National Entertainment State" under any other editor. Building on years of reporting by Ben Bagdikian and Herbert Schiller—*Nation* contributors since the McWilliams era—the issue contained *The Nation*'s first ever "gatefold," opening to reveal not an unclothed human model but the unsightly forms of the corporate colossi who together held a monopoly on television news. Though the World Wide Web was just out of its CERN swaddling clothes, *The Nation*'s focus on the dangers of what vanden Heuvel calls "consolidation, conglomeratization, Murdochization" could hardly have been more prescient.

NATION ISSUES USED TO CLOSE WEDNESDAYS. September 11, 2001, was a Tuesday. From Irving Place to the World Trade Center was a little over two miles. "Like everyone else in America, we watched television—horrified, saddened, angry," vanden Heuvel later recalled. "People wept, and at the same time took notes and got on the phones." But *The Nation*'s phone lines ran under 7 World Trade Center, which caught fire when the twin towers collapsed, and then itself collapsed just after five that evening. It is a measure of how little was known that the lead editorial still held out hope of survivors: "We have taken a great wound, we Americans, and our first task is to rescue survivors if that is still possible, to grieve and to remain alert until we better understand what happened to us."

One of those trying hardest to understand was Jonathan Schell: "On Tuesday morning, a piece was torn out of our world," his cover article began. "A patch of blue sky that should not have been there opened up in the New York skyline." In the weeks to come, as the debate inside the magazine raged between those who agreed with Christopher Hitchens' column on "fascism with an Islamic face," castigating leftists who drew a causal relationship between US foreign policy and the attacks, and those, like Robert Fisk, who pointed to "the historical wrongs and the injustices that lie behind the firestorms," Schell's sober, stunned, heartbreakingly rational "Letter From Ground Zero" columns came to represent the voice of the magazine—or at least the voice of sanity.

"One of my roles as editor has been to figure out the bridge from personal to political," vanden Heuvel wrote. "How do you balance individual grief and anger at the attacks with proportionality, justice and wisdom in response?" Those questions, which divided *The Nation*—and the left—dominated "A Just Response," a special issue whose lead essay, by Richard Falk, tried to grapple with what justice might mean in a world "on the brink of a global, intercivilizational war without battlefields and borders." Amid the news of FBI roundups of Arab-Americans and calls for the CIA—as spectacularly ineffective as ever in thwarting the attacks—to be "unleashed," Eric Foner reminded readers that civil rights and civil liberties "are not gifts from the state that can be rescinded when it desires." Invoking *The Nation*'s—and the country's—proud tradition of dissent and debate, Foner wrote: "At times of crisis the most patriotic act of all is the unyielding defense of civil liberties, the right to dissent and equality before the law for all."

It would be vanden Heuvel's task as editor—and *The Nation*'s triumph—to resist the siren song of consensus, either for or against the war, and the stampede to join the Bush administration's bandwagon.

THE NATION'S NEW CONFIDENCE, AND HIGHER profile, helped turn a haven for dissent into a campaigning organ. In October 2002, the magazine ran "An Open Letter to the Members of Congress" urging them to vote against Bush's war in Iraq. "A time comes when silence is betrayal," said the editorial, quoting Martin Luther King Jr.'s comment on the Vietnam War. Addressing the failure of nerve on the part of congressional Democrats—"You are the opposition party, but you do not oppose"—it echoed *Nation* editorials dating back to the annexation of Hawaii and the conquest of the Philippines, warning that today Americans are "threatened by a monster of unbalanced and unaccountable power—a new Leviathan—that is taking shape among us in the executive branch of the government. This Leviathan—concealed in an ever-deepening, self-created secrecy and fed by streams of money from corporations that, as scandal after scandal has shown, have themselves broken free of elementary accountability—menaces civil liberties even as it threatens endless, unprovoked war."

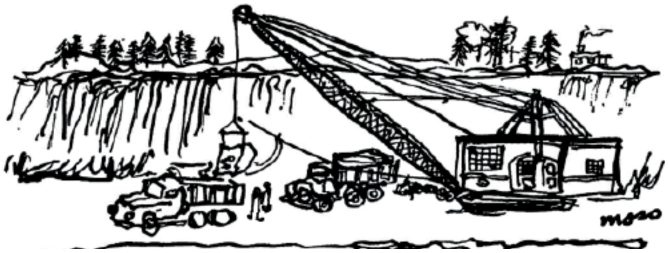
Under vanden Heuvel's editorship, subscriptions had already risen past 100,000 and would even approach 200,000. Navasky, who stayed on as publisher emeritus, credited George W. Bush. "If it's bad for the country, it's good for *The Nation*," he quipped.

The Nation's commitment to sustained coverage isn't about winning prizes, though it has earned more than a few of those. In 2008, *The Nation* devoted a special issue to "The New Inequality." Amid an election campaign in which the widening gap between rich and poor never got much attention—this was four years before Mitt Romney's slip about the "47 percent"—articles by Doug Henwood and Barbara Ehrenreich fleshed out the facts behind, as the issue's centerfold put it, America's "Plutocracy Reborn." Though this issue did win the Hillman Prize, the real dividend on the magazine's investment came three years later, when Occupy Wall Street put inequality on the world's agenda. **150th**

The Landscaping of Hell

WENDELL BERRY

JANUARY 24, 1966



At Frankfort, Ky., last August and October, there was a hearing on three new strip-mine regulations. These were later adopted and put into effect, and now even stricter measures are pending. And so there begins to be some evidence that the state government has at last undertaken a serious interest in one of the state's most urgent problems. But since they face a powerful and determined opposition, supporters might do well to consider the attitude and the morality displayed by the mining companies at the hearings.

The mining companies have made it clear that they will destroy anything, they will stop at nothing, so long as the result can be inked in black on their accounting sheets. They have been abetted by the mischief and greed of local officials, by public indifference, by state paralysis, by federal cross-purposes and confusion. Against them there has been only a local organization of small landowners.

If there is to remain any hope at all for the region, strip mining will have to be stopped. Otherwise, all the federal dollars devoted to the region's poor will have the same effect as rain pouring on an uprooted plant. To recover good hope and economic health the people need to have their land whole under their feet. And much of their land has already been destroyed.

To destroy a forest or an ecology or a species is an act of greater seriousness than we have yet grasped, and it is perhaps of graver consequence. But these destructions will mend. The forest will grow back, the natural balances will be restored, the ecological gap left by the destroyed species will be filled by another species. But to destroy the earth itself is to destroy all the possibilities of the earth, among them the possibility of recovery. The land destroyed by strip mining is destroyed forever; it will never again be what it was, it will never be what it would have become if let alone. Such destruction makes man a parasite upon the source of his life; it implicates him in the death of the earth, the destruction of his meanings. Those men who send the bulldozer blades into the mountainsides bear the awesome burden of responsibility for an act that no one can fully comprehend, much less justify.

And though violence to the earth must seem in the long view to be the gravest of their offenses, one is no less troubled by their violence to justice. For do not all our rights have as their ultimate expression and meaning the right of a man to be secure in his own home? When this right is no longer defended by any power greater than himself, his days begin to come to him by accident, in default of whatever caprice of power may next require his life. When the possessions and households of citizens are no longer honored by the acts, as well as the principles, of their government, then the concentration camp ceases to be one of the possibilities of human nature and becomes one of its likelihoods.

ENCOUNTER

Land, Community, Justice: The Gospel According to Wendell Berry

WEN STEPHENSON

The scene is a hearing room in Frankfort, Kentucky. The topic is strip-mining. And the observer is Wendell Berry.

"There was in the statements and questions of the coal company attorneys," Berry writes, "and in the testimony of the operators, the unmistakable implication that anything can be justified by profit; that a man may own the land in the same sense in which he would own a piece of furniture or a suit of clothes, it is his to exploit, misuse or destroy altogether should he decide that to do so would be economically feasible. The question of the morality of any practice, for these men, has been completely replaced by the question of its profitability."

Those words appeared in the January 24, 1966, issue of *The Nation*, in an essay titled "The Landscaping of Hell." Berry goes on to describe hardscrabble mountain homes and farms destroyed by mine "spoil"—lives recklessly, viciously disregarded. And as we know, the destruction of Appalachia never ceased. Berry's essay could have been written yesterday.

Wendell Berry, going strong at 80, is many things: a poet, a novelist, an essayist, an agrarian, a family man, a small farmer on the banks of the Kentucky River, a member of his rural community. And he's an activist—perhaps even an environmentalist, though he transcends any narrow idea of what that word may mean. Like Henry David Thoreau, who was as much an abolitionist as a naturalist, Berry is most deeply concerned with how to live in relation not just to nature, but to nature and one's fellow human beings—one's community, in every sense, human and wild—because the two cannot be separated.

But there's something else that must be said about Berry: he's a serious Christian, or, as he's put it, "a person who takes the Gospel seriously." He's also a forthright critic of Christianity's—or, really, Christians'—complicity in our environmental crises. "The certified Christian seems just as likely as anyone else to join the military-industrial conspiracy to murder Creation," he wrote in "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," his 1992 lecture at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. In that same lecture, however, he explained that he cannot simply dismiss Christianity, despite the "catastrophic discrepancies" he sees between the Bible's teachings and "allegedly respectable Christian behavior." Instead, for those like himself, "a better possibility is that this, our

HARRY MOSS

native religion, should survive and renew itself so that it may become as largely and truly instructive as we need it to be."

That possibility is, if anything, more urgent today than it was in 1966, when Berry wrote prophetically in *The Nation* of "strip-mine morality." To understand what he means, it's helpful to revisit another of Berry's prophetic essays, "The Gift of Good Land," published in his 1981 volume by that title. There, he sets out to make "a Biblical argument for ecological and agricultural responsibility," and in the process develops a scriptural and moral connection between land, community and justice.

The "good land" to which Berry refers is none other than the Promised Land of the Old Testament: "a divine gift to a fallen people." While condemning the "ferocity" and "genocidal intent" of the biblical conquest of Canaan, Berry wants us to see that it is accompanied in the Scripture, paradoxically, by an ethical system that is antithetical to the "greed and violence" of the conquest itself.

That ethical system, a "vein of light" in a "rapacious" human darkness, "originates in the idea of the land as a gift—not a free or a deserved gift, but a gift given upon certain rigorous conditions." What the people are given, he argues, "is not ownership, but a sort of tenancy." Not only that, but "they must be neighborly," he adds. "They must be just, kind to one another, generous to strangers, honest in trading."

These are "social virtues," Berry notes, but they have ecological significance as well. The land, he explains, "is described as an 'inheritance'; the community is understood to exist not just in space, but also in time." In other words, one's neighbors are not only those living next door, but also "the dead who have bequeathed the land to the living" as well as, crucially, "the unborn to whom the living will in turn bequeath it." And because we have "no direct behavioral connection" to people who are not yet alive, he writes, "The only neighborly thing we can do for them is to preserve their inheritance."

What Berry is pointing to here is a deep ethical source, a kind of spiritual wellspring of environmental, social and intergenerational justice. "It is a contradiction," he writes, "to love your neighbor and despise the great inheritance on which his life depends." He goes on, turning to address those members of his own faith who have broken the covenant: "If 'the earth is the Lord's' and we are His stewards, then obviously some livelihoods are 'right' and some are not. Is there, for instance, any such thing as a Christian strip mine?… Is there not, in Christian ethics, an implied requirement of practical separation from a destructive or wasteful economy?"

It is impossible to "live harmlessly," Berry acknowledges in "The Gift of Good Land." But when we "ignorantly, greedily" destroy our inheritance, which is also that of our children and future generations, it is not just a sin; it is a desecration. "In such desecration," he concludes, "we condemn ourselves to spiritual and moral loneliness, and others to want."

Berry, first in the *Nation* essay and then in "The Gift of Good Land," couldn't be clearer: our relationship to the earth, the land, is the basis of our relationship to the community; and there can be no true community without love of neighbor—without justice, social and generational, in place and in time.

"Corporate industrialism," Berry writes in his 2012 Jefferson Lecture for the National Endowment for the Humanities, "has failed to sustain the health and stability of human society. Among its characteristic signs are destroyed communities, neighborhoods, families, small businesses, and small farms. It has failed just as conspicuously and more dangerously to conserve the wealth and health of nature." In the end, he says, "land and people have suffered together, as invariably they must." And yet, he concludes, none of this was necessary or inevitable. There has always been, in 1966 as now, a choice. "We do not have to live," Berry tells us, "as if we are alone."

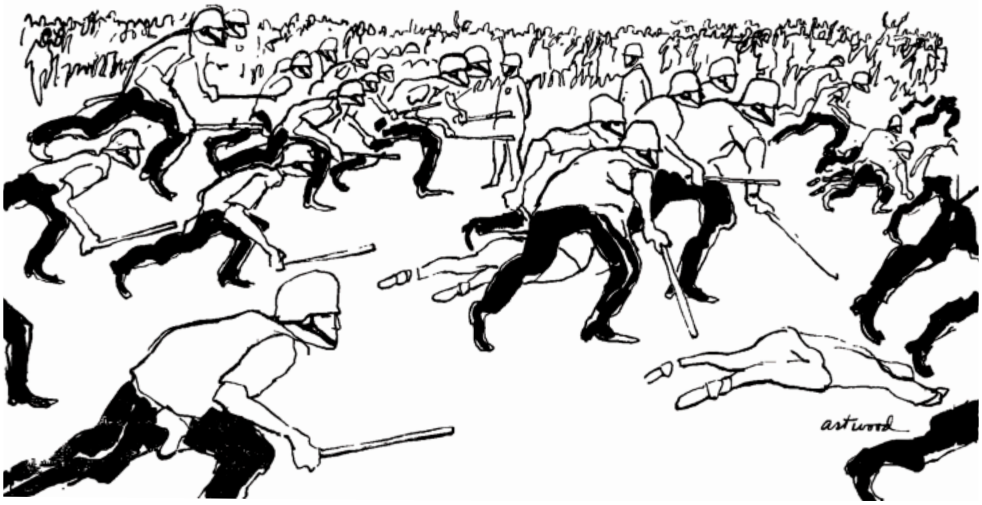
What the coal—and oil and gas—companies are engaged in today is a kind of planetary strip-mining, the atmosphere choked with carbon spoil. And those living downslope are our own children and countless innocents everywhere—those alive now and those yet to be born. To live now as if one is alone—and as if profit is the only commandment—is to condemn every member of the human community to an irreparable world and an irremediable want.

> *"The thrust of the new movement is not that women are as good as men. Neither is it that women are 'different but equal.' The women's liberation movement has begun to question whether what we define as feminine and masculine has anything to do with being female or male. It is objecting outright to the dominance of male values and of men as their agents."*
>
> –Jo Freeman, "The New Feminists," 1969

ART ARCHIVE

The System Is the Problem

Art Wood, October 7, 1968



1965-1975

[1 of 7]

HOW ISRAEL WENT TO WAR

NATION

Confronting Nixon

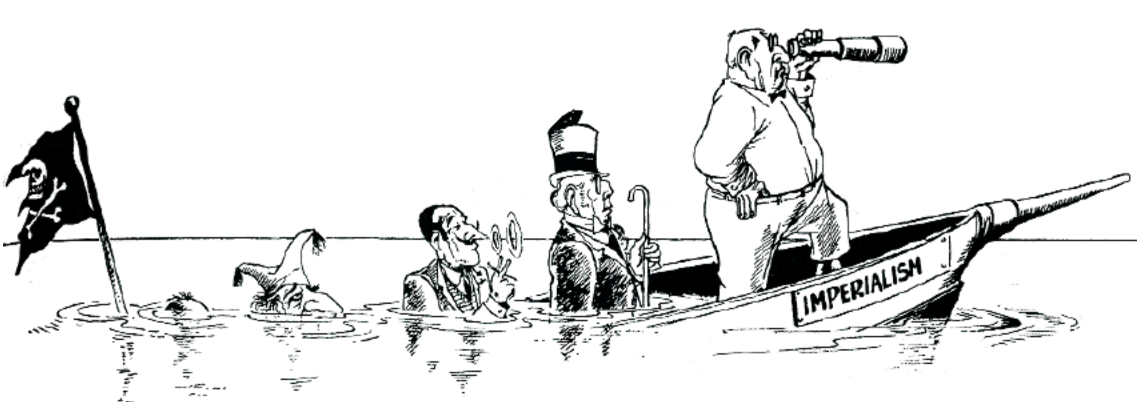
The Measures To Be Taken

CAREY McWILLIAMS

[November 5, 1973]

2-25-1967
Martin Luther King Jr. denounces the Vietnam War at a *Nation*-sponsored event in Los Angeles—five weeks before his famous Riverside Church speech.

5-4-1970
The Ohio National Guard kills four Kent State students during an antiwar protest. *The Nation* predicts the deaths "will provoke [radicalization] on a mass scale."



How to Tell When the Rebels Have Won

EQBAL AHMAD

AUGUST 30, 1965

History confirms the sovereignty of the human factor in revolutionary warfare. In Vietnam, the signs are clear. The South Vietnamese regime has no legitimacy, and no government backed by a Western power can hope for popular support in a country where the Communists have capitalized on the nationalist appeal of restoring independence and unity. The massacre of civilians began as early as 1960. It has since escalated. The intellectuals and moderates have deserted or defected. And North Vietnam is subjected to daily bombings. America and its South Vietnamese allies have lost the revolutionary war because they could not win the support of the Vietnamese people, and now their moral isolation is total.

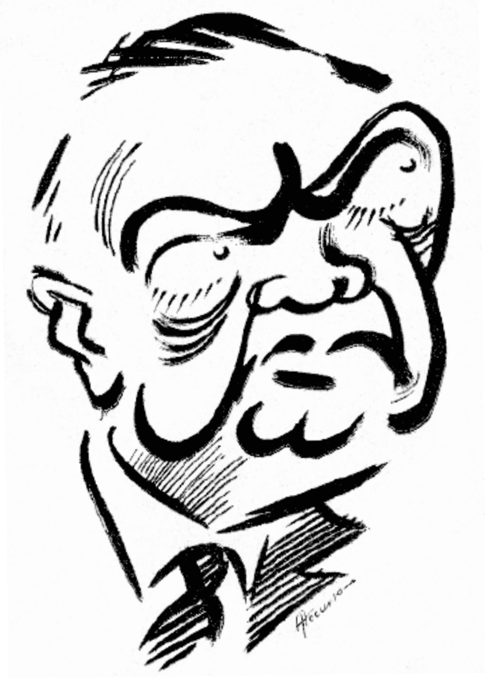
As an Asian, I am aware of the appeals and threat of communism, and I would support policies likely to prevent its expansion. But I do not believe that communism is the wave of the future, and therefore I am neither panicked nor paralyzed. I believe that Vietnam is a unique case—culturally, historically and politically. I hope that the United States will not repeat its Vietnam blunders elsewhere. I do not subscribe to the domino theory and I am anguished by Americans who call Vietnam a test case. Vietnam is the only country in the world where the nationalist movement for independence was led by the Communists during its most crucial and heroic decades. In new countries where institutional loyalties are still weak, the legitimacy and popularity of a regime derives from its nationalist heroes and martyrs. Unfortunately for the free world the George Washington of Vietnam, its Gandhi, was a Communist nationalist. Ho Chi Minh and his associates are understandably considered the founding fathers of modern Vietnam. It was morbid optimism to expect an absentee aristocrat to supplant a leader who had devoted a lifetime to the liberation of his country, and to defeat a leadership and cadres whose organic ties with the peasants were cemented by the bitter struggle for independence.

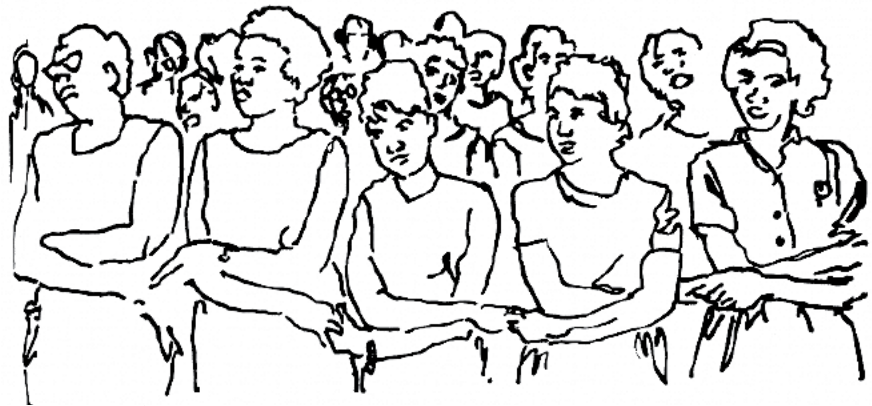
Vietnam is also the only country in which the United States gave substantial support to a colonial power in a war of independence. This could not have endeared America to the Vietnamese people. Then in the "Southern zone" America replaced France. To most Vietnamese the present war, therefore, is a continuation of the struggle for independence. I know how Asians feel about America's action. They call it neo-colonialism; some think it is imperialism. I know this is very wrong because Americans are naturally sympathetic to peoples' struggles for freedom and justice, and they would like to help if they could. I prefer the term "maternalism" for American policy in countries like Vietnam, because it reminds me of the story of an elephant who, as she strolled benignly in the jungle, stepped on a mother partridge and killed her. When she noticed the orphaned siblings, tears filled the kind elephant's eyes. "Ah, I too have maternal instincts," she said turning to the orphans, and sat on them.

ART ARCHIVE

J. Edgar Hoover

Anthony Accurso, February 20, 1967





The Last Steep Ascent

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

MARCH 14, 1966

At the end of 1965 the civil rights movement was depicted as bewildered and uncertain, groping desperately for new directions. The substantial legislative accomplishments of the past several years, it was argued, dealt so extensively with civil rights problems that the movement had become stagnated in an embarrassment of riches. Negro leaders, we were told, did not know how to maintain their assembled armies nor what goals they should seek.

The Negro freedom movement has a policy and a program; it is the white power structure that gropes in indecision. White America, caught between the Negro upsurge and its own conscience, evolved a limited policy toward Negro freedom. It could not live with the intolerable brutality and bruising humiliation imposed upon the Negro by the society it cherished as democratic. A wholesome national consensus found expression in laws, court decisions and in the alteration of long-entrenched custom. But the prohibition of barbaric behavior, while beneficial to the victim, does not constitute the attainment of equality or freedom. A man may cease beating his wife without thereby creating a wholesome marital relationship.

The period which has been completed, though attended by turmoil and spectacular events, was relatively easy to accomplish. For the white majority there were few hardships, and the lifting of some burden of guilt adequately compensated for any inconvenience.

The future is more complex. Slums with hundreds of thousands of living units are not eradicated as easily as lunch counters or buses are integrated. Jobs are harder to create than voting rolls.

It is easy to conceive of a plan to raise the minimum wage and thus in a single stroke extract millions of people from poverty. But between the conception and the realization there lies a formidable wall. Someone has been profiting from the low wages of Negroes. Depressed living standards for Negroes are a structural part of the economy. A hardening of opposition to the satisfaction of Negro needs must be anticipated as the movement presses against financial privilege.

The danger of this period is not that Negroes will lose their gains. History will not repeat itself in a simple cycle. It can, however, fail to move forward and can become stalled on a higher plateau without prospect of reaching the summit.

Our nation is now so rich, so productive, that the continuation of persistent poverty is incendiary because the poor cannot rationalize their deprivation. It is an anachronism in the second half of the 20th century. Only the neglect to plan intelligently and adequately and the unwillingness genuinely to embrace economic justice enable it to persist.

Negroes expect their freedom, not as subjects of benevolence but as Americans who were at Bunker Hill, who toiled to clear the forests, drain the swamps, build the roads—who fought the wars and dreamed the dreams the founders of the nation considered to be an American birthright.

A Strategy to End Poverty

RICHARD A. CLOWARD AND FRANCES FOX PIVEN

MAY 2, 1966

How can the poor be organized to press for relief from poverty? How can a broad-based movement be developed and the current disarray of activist forces be halted? These questions confront, and confound, activists today. It is our purpose to advance a strategy which affords the basis for a convergence of civil rights organizations, militant anti-poverty groups and the poor. If this strategy were implemented, a political crisis would result that could lead to legislation for a guaranteed annual income and thus an end to poverty.

The strategy is based on the fact that a vast discrepancy exists between the benefits to which people are entitled under public welfare programs and the sums which they actually receive. This gulf is not recognized in a society that is wholly and self-righteously oriented toward getting people *off* the welfare rolls. Nearly 8 million persons (half of them white) now subsist on welfare, but for every person on the rolls at least one more probably meets existing criteria of eligibility but is not obtaining assistance.

The discrepancy is not an accident stemming from bureaucratic inefficiency; rather, it is an integral feature of the welfare system which, if challenged, would precipitate a profound financial and political crisis. The force for that challenge, and the strategy we propose, is a massive drive to recruit the poor *onto* the welfare rolls.

A series of welfare drives in large cities would impel action on a new federal program to distribute income, eliminating the present public welfare system and alleviating the abject poverty which it perpetrates. Widespread campaigns to register the eligible poor for welfare aid, and to help existing recipients obtain their full benefits, would produce bureaucratic disruption in

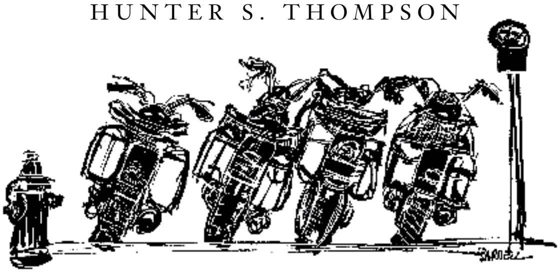
Activists should precipitate a financial and political crisis to help the poor.

welfare agencies and fiscal disruption in local and state governments. These disruptions would generate severe political strains, and deepen existing divisions among elements in the big-city Democratic coalition: the remaining white middle class, the white working-class ethnic groups and the growing minority poor. To avoid a further weakening of that historic coalition, a national Democratic administration would be constrained to advance a federal solution to poverty that would override local welfare failures, local class and racial conflicts and local revenue dilemmas. By the internal disruption of local bureaucratic practices, by the furor over public welfare poverty, and by the collapse of current financing arrangements, powerful forces can be generated for major economic reforms at the national level.

No strategy is foolproof. But if unforeseen contingencies thwart this plan, there would be gains even in defeat. For one thing, the plight of many poor people would be somewhat eased in the course of an assault upon public welfare. Existing recipients would come to know their rights and how to defend them, thus acquiring dignity where none now exists. Those seeking new ways to engage the Negro politically should remember that public resources have always been the fuel for low-income urban political organization. If organizers can deliver millions of dollars in cash benefits to the ghetto masses, it seems reasonable to expect that the masses will deliver their loyalties to their benefactors. They have always done so in the past.

The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders

HUNTER S. THOMPSON



MAY 17, 1965

Ever since World War II, California has been strangely plagued by wild men on motorcycles, booming along the highways and stopping here and there to get drunk and raise hell. Most of the cyclists are harmless weekend types, and no more dangerous than skiers or skin divers. But a few belong to what the others call "outlaw clubs," and these are the ones who are likely to turn up almost anywhere in the state, looking for action. Despite everything the psychiatrists and Freudian casuists have to say about them, they are tough, mean and potentially as dangerous as packs of wild boar. When push comes to shove, any leather fetishes or inadequacy feelings that may be involved are entirely beside the point, as anyone who has ever tangled with these boys will sadly testify. In this league, sportsmanship is for old liberals and young fools.

A lot of this is a pose, but anyone who believes that's all it is has been on thin ice since the death of Jay Gatsby. The vast majority of motorcycle outlaws are uneducated, unskilled men between 20 and 30, and most have no credentials except a police record. So at the root of their sad stance is a lot more than a wistful yearning for acceptance in a world they never made; their real motivation is an instinctive certainty as to what the score really is. They are out of the ball game and they know it—and that is their meaning; for unlike most losers in today's society, the Hell's Angels not only know but spitefully proclaim exactly where they stand.

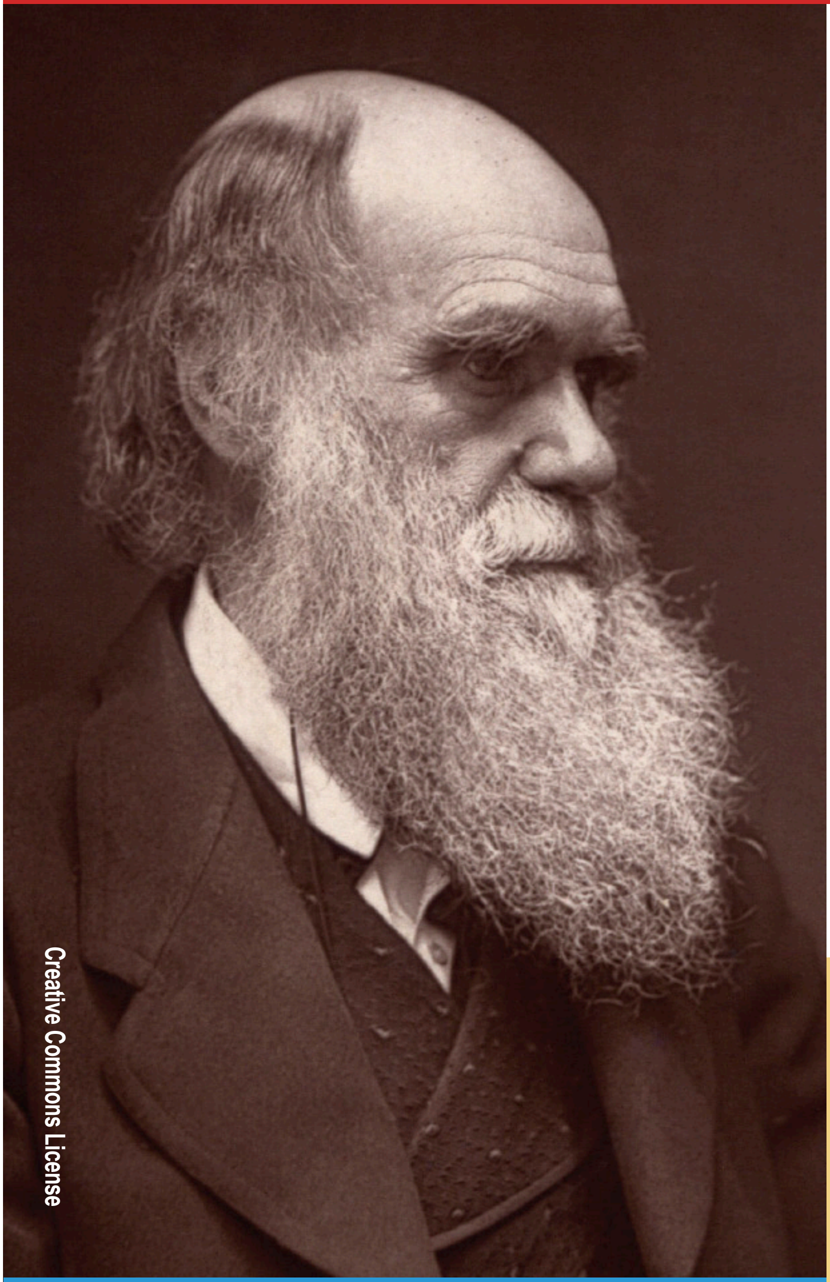
I went to one of their meetings recently, and half-way through the night I thought of Joe Hill on his way to face a Utah firing squad and his final words: "Don't mourn, organize." It is safe to say that no Hell's Angel has ever heard of Joe Hill or would know a Wobbly from a Bushmaster; but nevertheless they are somehow related. The I.W.W. had serious plans for running the world, while the Hell's Angels mean only to defy the world's machinery. But instead of losing quietly, one by one, they have banded together with a mindless kind of loyalty and moved outside the framework, for good or ill. There is nothing particularly romantic or admirable about it; that's just the way it is, strength in unity. They don't mind telling you that running fast and loud on their customized Harley 74s gives them a power and a purpose that nothing else seems to offer.

Beyond that, their position as self-proclaimed outlaws elicits a certain popular appeal, especially in the West, where the outlaw tradition is still honored. The unarticulated link between the Hell's Angels and the millions of losers and outsiders who don't wear any colors is the key to their notoriety and the ambivalent reactions they inspire.

> *"The issues of how to change values and accommodate different interests within society lead student radicals to the question of how they as individuals can be in, but not of, an authoritarian world—how they can function as citizens and job holders in a society of corporate elitism (thereby contributing to it economically) and yet remain radicals."*
>
> –Richard Blumenthal (now US senator from Connecticut),
> "SDS: Protest Is Not Enough," May 22, 1967

ILLUSTRATIONS: HAROLD BARNELL

IN REASON WE TRUST



CHARLES DARWIN

> “I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe … will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.”

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A Report From Occupied Territory

JAMES BALDWIN

JULY 11, 1966

On April 17, some school children overturned a fruit stand in Harlem. This would have been a mere childish prank if the children had been white—had been, that is, the children of that portion of the citizenry for whom the police work and who have the power to control the police. But these children were black, and the police chased them and beat them and took out their guns. Daniel Hamm, for example, tells us that "…we heard children scream. We turned around and walked back to see what happened. I saw this policeman with his gun out and with his billy in his hand. I like put myself in the way to keep him from shooting the kids. Because first of all he was shaking like a leaf and jumping all over the place. And I thought he might shoot one of them."

He was arrested, along with Wallace Baker, carried to the police station, beaten—"six and twelve at a time would beat us. They got so tired beating us they just came in and started spitting on us—they even bring phlegm up and spit on me." This went on all day. In the evening, Wallace Baker and Daniel Hamm were taken to Harlem Hospital for X-rays and then carried back to the police station, where the beating continued all night. They were eventually released, with the fruit-stand charges pending, in spite of the testimony of the fruit-stand owner. This fruit-stand owner had already told the police that neither Wallace Baker nor Daniel Hamm had ever been at his store and that they certainly had had nothing to do with the fruit-stand incident. But this had no effect on the conduct of the police.

The citizens of Harlem, who can come to grief at any hour in the streets, and who are not safe at their windows, are forbidden the very air. They are safe only in their houses—or were, until the city passed the No Knock, Stop and Frisk laws, which permit a policeman to enter one's home without knocking and to stop anyone on the streets, at will, at any hour, and search him. Harlem believes, and I certainly agree, that these laws are directed against Negroes. They are certainly not directed against anybody else.

Occupied territory is occupied territory, even though it be found in that New World which the Europeans conquered, and it is axiomatic, in occupied territory, that any act of resistance, even though it be executed by a child, be answered at once, and with the full weight of the occupying forces. Furthermore, since the police, not at all surprisingly, are abysmally incompetent—for neither, in fact, do they have any respect for the law, which is not surprising, either—Harlem and all of New York City is full of unsolved crimes. A crime, as we know, is solved when someone is arrested and convicted. It is not indispensable, but it is useful, to have a confession. If one is carried back and forth from the precinct to the hospital long enough, one is likely to confess to anything.

These things happen, in all our Harlems, every single day. If we ignore this fact, and our common responsibility to change this fact, we are sealing our doom.

I have witnessed and endured the brutality of the police many more times than once—but, of course, I cannot prove it. I cannot prove it because the Police Department investigates itself, quite as though it were answerable only to itself. But it cannot be allowed to be answerable only to itself. It must be made to answer to the community which pays it, and which it is legally sworn to protect, and if American Negroes are not a part of the American community, then all of the American professions are a fraud.

This arrogant autonomy, which is guaranteed the police, not only in New York, by *the most powerful forces in American life*—otherwise, they would not dare to claim it, would indeed be unable to claim it—creates a situation which is as close to anarchy as it already, visibly, is close to martial law.

The police are simply the hired enemies of this population. They are present to keep the Negro in his place and to protect white business interests, and they have no other function. They are, moreover—even in a country which makes the very grave error of equating ignorance with stupidity—quite stunningly ignorant; and, since they know that they are hated, they are always afraid. One cannot possibly arrive at a more surefire formula for cruelty.

This is why those pious calls to "respect the law," always to be heard from prominent citizens each time the ghetto explodes, are so obscene. The law is meant to be my servant and not my master, still less my torturer and my murderer. To respect the law, in the context in which the American Negro finds himself, is simply to surrender his self-respect.

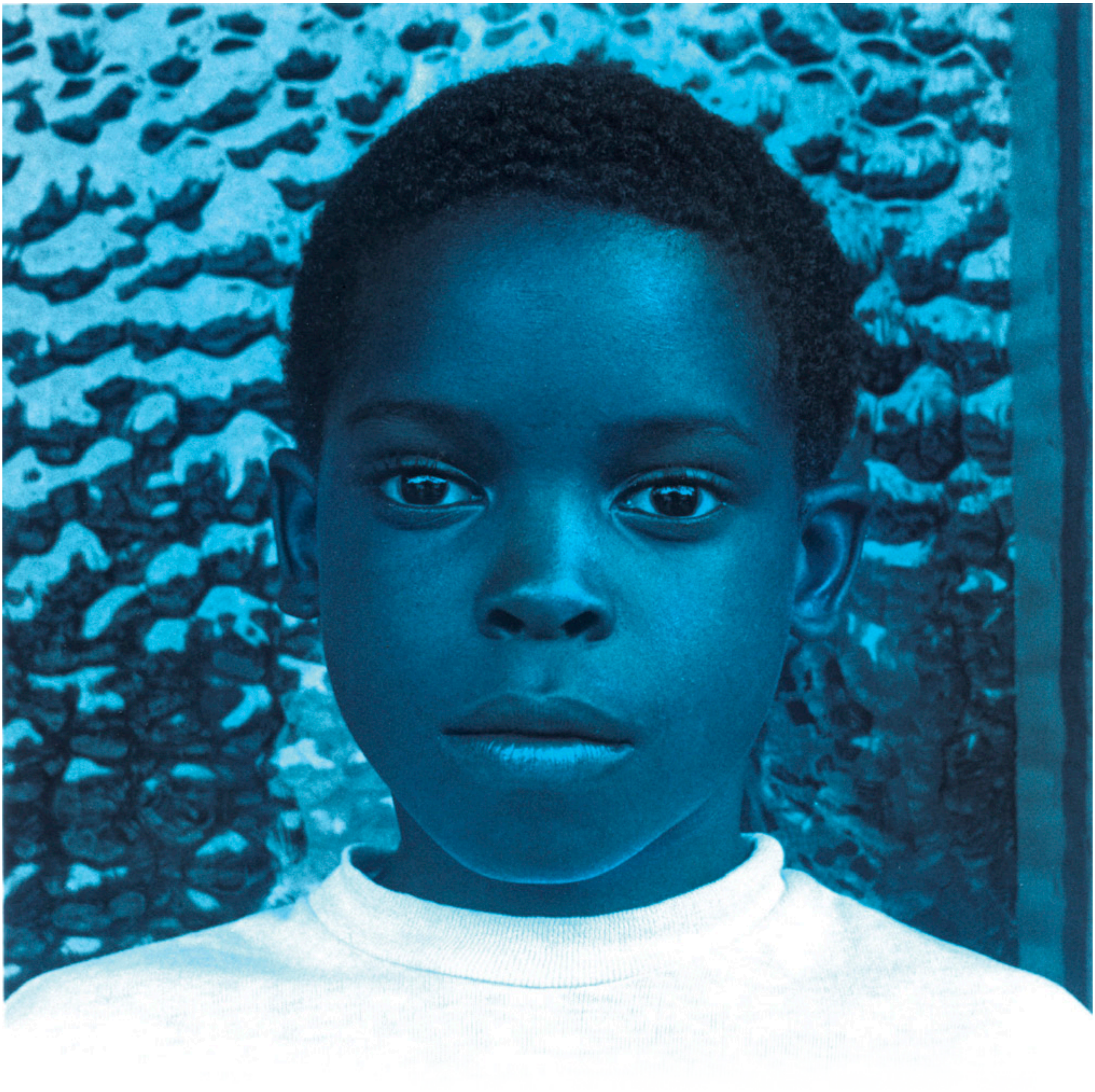
These young men have been in jail for two years now. People are destroyed very easily. Where is the civilization and where, indeed, is the morality which can afford to destroy so many?

Hamm and Baker, two of the so-called Harlem Six, were convicted of murder in 1965 on the basis of forced confessions, specious evidence, and manufactured police claims of a conspiracy to kill whites. They were later retried and released from prison in 1973.

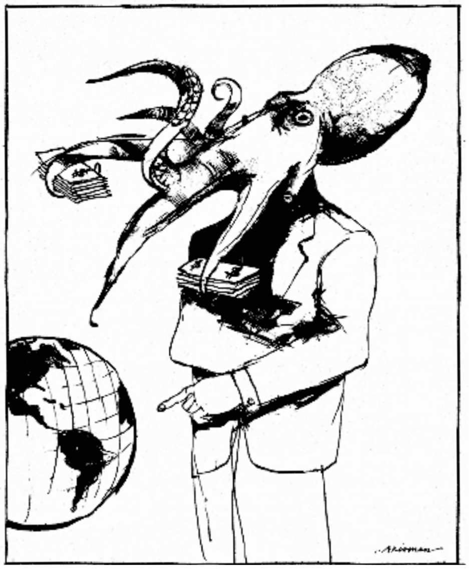
ENCOUNTER

Blue Black Boy

CARRIE MAE WEEMS



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY



The Chicago Boys in Chile

ORLANDO LETELIER

AUGUST 28, 1976

It would seem to be a common-sensical sort of observation that economic policies are conditioned by and at the same time modify the social and political situation where they are put into practice. Economic policies, therefore, are introduced *in order* to alter social structures.

The necessary connection between economic policy and its sociopolitical setting appears to be absent from many analyses of the current situation in Chile. The violation of human rights, the system of institutionalized brutality, the drastic control and suppression of every form of meaningful dissent is discussed as a phenomenon only indirectly linked, or indeed entirely unrelated, to the classical unrestrained "free market" policies that have been enforced by the military junta. This failure to connect has been particularly characteristic of private and public financial institutions, which have publicly praised and supported the economic policies adopted by the Pinochet government, while regretting the "bad international image" the junta has gained from its "incomprehensible" persistence in torturing, jailing and persecuting all its critics.

The usefulness of the distinction has been particularly appreciated by those who have generated the economic policies now being carried out in Chile. In *Newsweek* of June 14, Milton Friedman, the intellectual architect and unofficial adviser for the team of economists now running the Chilean economy, stated: "In spite of my profound disagreement with the authoritarian political system of Chile, I do not consider it as evil for an economist to render technical economic advice to the Chilean Government, any more than I would regard it as evil for a physician to give technical medical advice to the Chilean Government to help end a medical plague."

It is curious that the man who wrote a book, *Capitalism and Freedom*, to drive home the argument that only classical economic liberalism can support political democracy can now so easily disentangle economics from politics when the economic theories he advocates coincide with an absolute restriction of every type of democratic freedom. One would logically expect that if those who curtail private enterprise are held responsible for the effects of their measures in the political sphere, those who impose unrestrained "economic freedom" would also be held responsible when the imposition of this policy is inevitably accompanied by massive repression, hunger, unemployment and the permanence of a brutal police state.

In such a context, concentration of wealth is no accident, but a rule; it is not the marginal outcome of a difficult situation but the base for a social project; it is not an economic liability but a temporary political success. Their real failure is not their apparent inability to redistribute wealth or to generate a more even path of development (these are not their priorities) but their inability to convince the majority of Chileans that their policies are reasonable and necessary. In short, they have failed to destroy the consciousness of the Chilean people. The economic plan has had to be enforced, and in the Chilean context that could be done only by the killing of thousands, the establishment of concentration camps all over the country, the jailing of more than 100,000 persons in three years, the closing of trade unions and neighborhood organizations, and the prohibition of all political activities and all forms of free expression.

While the "Chicago boys" have provided an appearance of technical respectability to the *laissez-faire* dreams and political greed of the old landowning oligarchy and upper bourgeoisie of monopolists and financial speculators, the military has applied the brutal force required to achieve those goals. Repression for the majorities and "economic freedom" for small privileged groups are in Chile two sides of the same coin. It is nonsensical that those who inspire, support or finance that economic policy should try to present their advocacy as restricted to "technical considerations," while pretending to reject the system of terror it requires to succeed.

[September 30, 1978]

4-7-1979
***The Nation* publishes a scoop on the pardoning of Richard Nixon,** featuring some 400 words from Gerald Ford's embargoed memoir. His publisher sues, and *The Nation* loses in the Supreme Court.

3-23-1983
Ronald Reagan unveils plans for a "Star Wars" missile-defense system. *The Nation* condemns it in an editorial, saying: "Democracy was never envisioned as a political arrangement in which control over the life and death of millions of people would be placed in the hands of one or two leaders."

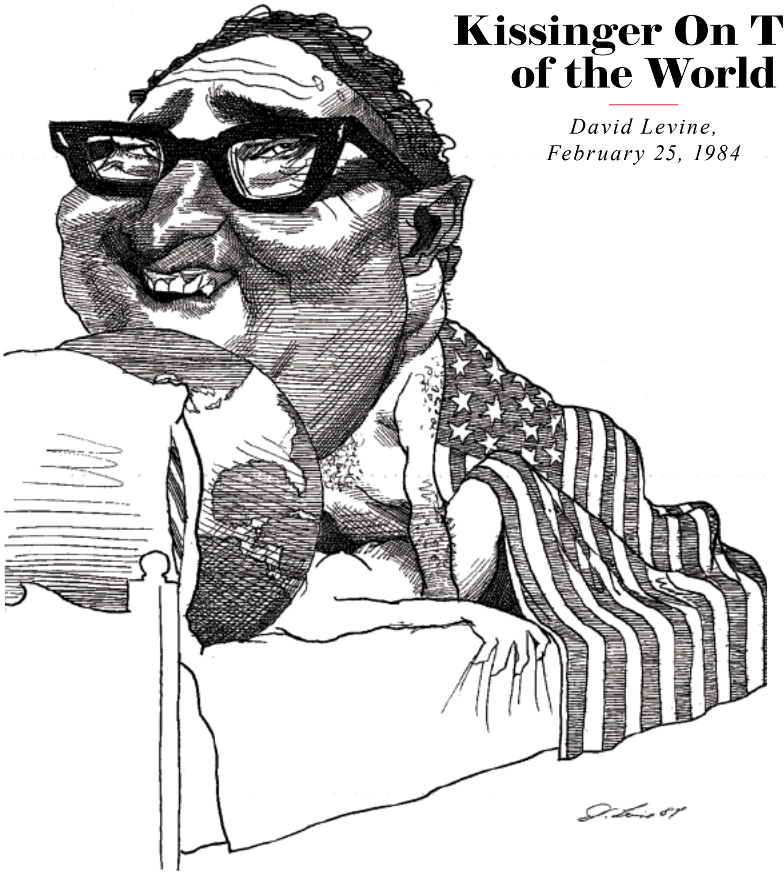
> *"If capitalism's hour is far from late, there are still honorable alternatives to accommodation—not only the attempt to alleviate suffering or promote political resistance but also the effort to keep values alive in a valueless society."*
>
> –Jackson Lears, on Christopher Lasch's best-selling *The Culture of Narcissism*, 1979

ILLUSTRATION: MARSHALL ARISMAN

ART ARCHIVE

Kissinger On Top of the World

David Levine, February 25, 1984



***NATION* CONTROVERSY**

This 1984 cartoon of Henry Kissinger by the late, great David Levine prompted a protest letter to editor Victor Navasky by two-thirds of *The Nation*'s staff, who thought it trafficked in ugly sexual stereotypes. In his 2005 memoir, *A Matter of Opinion*, Navasky described the look on Kissinger's face as one that "mingled evil and ecstasy."

New Wind in Latin America

PENNY LERNOUX

FEBRUARY 19, 1977

The average Indian, black or half-caste, is not poor because he is lazy, stupid, disorganized or cowardly; he is poor because he is oppressed, and because he is oppressed he becomes ensnared in a self-perpetuating culture of poverty.

As Brazilian theologian Eduardo Hoornaert points out, "Colonizers tell the colonized races that wealth comes from work, but the people do not believe this because they can see it isn't so. A 'good' position in society is only possible by belonging to the dominant culture."

None of this is new. But until recently nobody had a practical suggestion for replacing the culture of poverty with an ethic of development. Ironically, the institution responsible for finding a solution also shares the blame: the Roman Catholic Church. After centuries of denigrating the natives' culture and spiritual beliefs, the Church has made an abrupt about-face, discovering the latent power of "popular religiosity" to answer poverty and fatalism.

Though irregular churchgoers, Latin American Catholics never fail to visit their local shrines. Consequently, religious sanctuaries that were considered white elephants only a decade ago have suddenly taken on new importance in the Church's eyes. Moreover, these shrines can become a national symbol for a people with no means of political expression.

A religious shrine can also provide the people with an outlet for their worries and sufferings. At San Cayetano in Argentina, for example, a confessor is on duty twenty-four hours a day, not so much to listen to the people's sins as to give them some comfort in the current atmosphere of repression and fear. A typical case was the mother of a 2-year-old child who was contemplating suicide because her husband had "disappeared," a euphemism for political kidnappings by Argentina's right-wing paramilitary squads.

"The thesis of Marx and Engels that religion is just an opium for the people, and hence does not prepare them for social and economic growth, has been pretty well exploded," said Father Hoornaert. "Today, everyone recognizes that in certain circumstances religion can be an opium but that under others it can foment development: everything depends on how the message is delivered."

The problem has been that, until recently, the message encouraged fatalism. Because God is viewed as remote and powerful, like the local dictator or absent landlord, most Latin Americans ask the saints or souls of the dead to intervene for them. There is a saint for almost every activity, from lottery ticket selling to bread making, and for every conceivable problem. St. Patrick cures snake bites; St. Anthony is invoked to attract boyfriends.

General Pinochet's Chile offers another example of how the Church can use popular religiosity to bring about positive change—not among the generals, who believe they are above God, but among the poor, who have suffered the worst consequences of the military regime. To stave off starvation, the dioceses have encouraged the people to organize, with Church financial support, free school-lunch programs for 23,876 children and 127 community industries such as bakeries and leather goods factories.

While the people running the programs are afraid and economically insecure, theirs is not the fatalistic fear and anxiety that sociologists ascribe to the culture of poverty but the result of the military's ongoing political and economic repression. None would dream of shouting "Down with Pinochet" in a public plaza, yet these slum dwellers are neither cowed nor resigned. "We have not forgotten the social gains we made in the past," said a slum mother. "We cannot say anything now, but there will come a time when 'those people' must go, and then we will build a better society in which there is equality and justice for all of us."

PHOTO: CELSO DINIZ

A Fantasia on Black Suffering

Review of Flight to Canada, *by Ishmael Reed*

EDMUND WHITE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1976

Flight to Canada is a comic exploration of slavery by the best black writer around. The novel is genuinely funny, for Reed has not rendered faithfully the horrors of servitude but rather created a grotesque Civil War America out of scraps and snippets of the past, the present and the mythic. He has put together a brilliant montage of scenes, potent with feeling and thought, designed to flash on the mind's eye with the brilliance of stained-glass windows in a dark interior.

The main character, Raven Quickskill, is a slave who runs away from his master, Arthur Swille, hides out in Emancipation City and finally, after the war has ended, makes it over the border into Canada. Until his former owner is dead and buried, Quickskill must remain a fugitive, since Swille has resolved to capture him come what may. Throughout the tale the narration alternates between scenes back at the plantation in Virginia and scenes of Quickskill's precarious freedom.

FLIGHT To CANADA
a novel by
ISHMAEL REED

Reed blends the attitudes and trappings of the past century with those of today. Escaped slaves travel courtesy of Greyhound or Air Canada. Swille's bondsmen loll on waterbeds and watch color television in the luxury of the Frederick Douglass Houses. When Lincoln is shot, the event is served up to viewers again and again through instant replay on television. Lincoln himself is a hypocritical and befuddled Nixon, a racist who thinks of emancipation as a ploy. This historical melange could easily have turned tediously allegorical, but Reed never allows the parallels between the past and the present to become complete, nor does he permit the contemporary references to sap the vitality of his story.

Reed's fantasia on the classic themes of black suffering is a virtuoso performance. His endless list of names for blacks (cocoas, sables, kinks, mahoganies, spooks, shines, sbleezers, smokes, picks) is as funny and intolerable as a minstrel show. The best work of black fiction since *Invisible Man* both invites and outrages moral interpretation.

Flight to Canada must be hailed as an irrepressibly funny and mordant meditation on the eternal present of slavery in America. The book functions not only as a distorting mirror held up to the continuing history of servitude but also as the record of a single consciousness attempting to kill off the slave within—an heroic project that Chekhov once commended to us all.

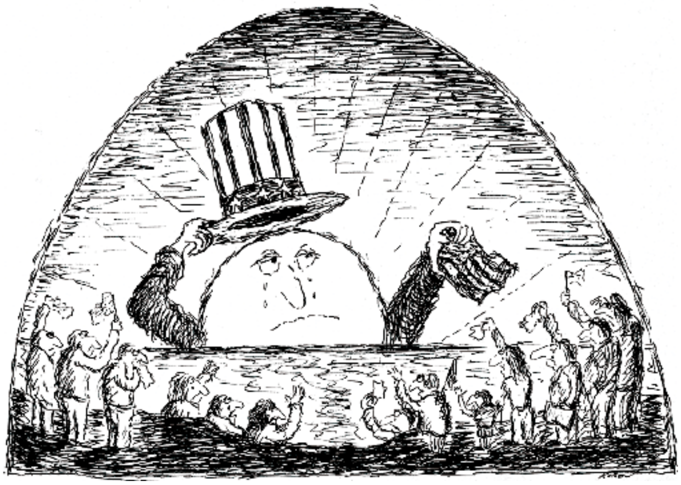


ILLUSTRATION: ED KOREN

Empire as a Way of Life

WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS

AUGUST 2, 1980

There is no way to understand the nature of our predicament except by confronting our history as an empire. That is the only way to comprehend the Iranian demand that we acknowledge our long-term interference in their affairs, the widespread anger about our acquiescence in the progression of Israel's settlements on the West Bank, the Russian charge that we apply one standard to them and another to ourselves and the deep resentment of us among the peoples of the poor countries. The only way we can come to terms with those matters is to look our imperial history in the eye without blinking, flinching or walking away into the wonderland of Woodrow Wilson's saving the world for democracy.

Let us start with a definition of empire: the use and abuse, and the ignoring, of other people for one's own welfare and convenience. America was born and bred of empire. That does not mean that we are unique; indeed, just the opposite. We are different only because we acquired the empire at a very low cost, because the rewards have been enormous and because until now we have masked our imperial truth with the rhetoric of freedom.

Make no mistake about it: the imperial way of life produced the promised rewards. It generated great economic wealth and effectively limited social discontent. But we must also report the costs. I do not for a moment dismiss the people killed and the property stolen, but

I would suggest that the greatest price was paid in the coin of our sensitivity about what we were doing and how that was understood by other peoples. We were already assuming that our right to security transcended the traditional right to defend what we had and had become the right to perfect security in any imaginable future contingency. We began to define security as the natural right to empire.

Americans became so habituated to empire as the price of freedom that they demanded ever more freedom and ever more empire. Andrew Jackson was at once a prime mover and the symbol of that new enthusiasm for the imperial way of life. More freedom at home and more expansion elsewhere. People like the Cherokees were clearly backward—and so a threat to the American Way. Move them out and force them to adapt. And all the while other Americans, the merchants, the shippers, the sealers, the whalers and the Navy, were busy defining the sea itself as another frontier to be penetrated, controlled and exploited.

There is a fine irony in the way that the great war for American freedom led on to ever more empire. And it is fitting that Lincoln provides us with an insight into the dynamics of that process. He knew, by December 1862, that the gamble on a quick victory had been lost. He had to have money and men in large quantities. He therefore appealed to the imperial tradition. Speaking to the agricultural majority, he wasted no euphemisms. He told them that they had to stay the course because it was not enough to have access to the world via New York and San Francisco. It was also necessary to control New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

The significance of Lincoln's appeal to Western farmers to fight on for imperial objectives upsets historians of every political persuasion. Radicals resist the notion that ordinary folk support imperialism. Conservatives cannot easily come to terms with the reality that empire is related to liberty as they define it. And liberals long to resolve the dilemma by defining empire as global freedom and welfare. There is no inherent or logical connection between being a domestic reformer and an anti-imperialist.

History never provides programmatic answers. But the best thing that can be said for our American empire is that we produced some very good questions. Now is the time to begin answering those questions.

Can you even imagine America as not an empire? I think often about the relationship between those two words—imagination and empire—and wonder if they are incompatible. The truth is that I think they are incompatible. Do you want to imagine a new America or do you want to preserve the empire? Now, as surely we all know, preserving the empire is an exercise in futility. We will sizzle or suffocate. So let us get on with imagining a new America.

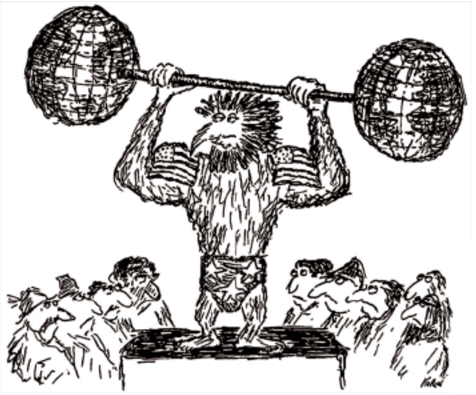
ENCOUNTER

Unmasking Uncle Sam

GREG GRANDIN

Looking back to 1980, in the months leading up to Ronald Reagan's election, only a few political commentators seemed to grasp the significance of the moment. Not so much that something bad loomed ahead—Reagan and the ascension of the New Right—but that the United States had already plunged into a fun-house reality, where words had become divorced from meaning and political abstractions had warped into their opposites, freedom chief among them.

Two of the most prescient were Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, whose column, "The Political Economy," appeared in *The Nation* in the late 1970s through the mid-'80s. Ferguson and Rogers warned of the "dissociations of thought and action, opinion and performance, and language and reality" that characterized political discourse in the United States. "There can be no mass renewal of America's democratic tradition," they wrote, "until these dissociations are overcome—until we set aside the stale, misleading fictions of conventional liberalism and call things by their names."



ED KOREN

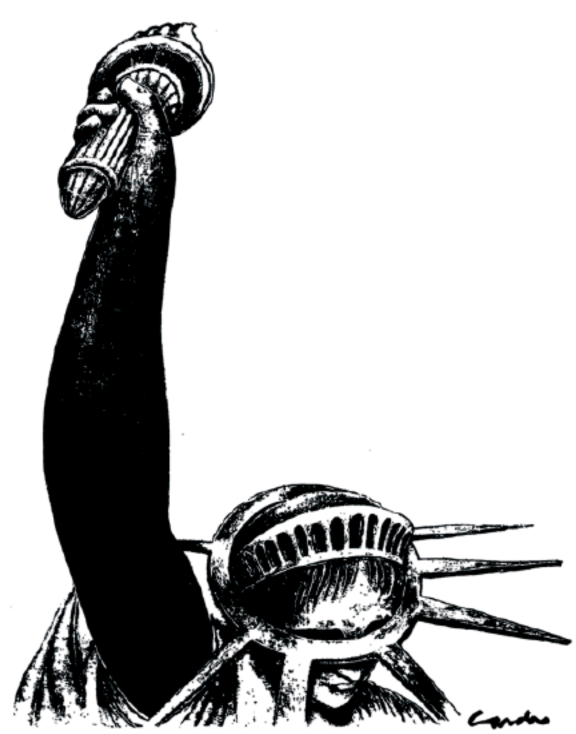
One of the things that needed to be named was empire. In the wake of Vietnam, Cambodia and Watergate, even liberals like Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. had started to affix the word "imperial" to the presidency. Schlesinger identified a "semantic collapse" provoked by unchecked militarism, a "horrid military-bureaucratic patois" used "to protect our sensibilities from the ghastly things we were doing," such as "the frightful reality of napalm."

But to describe the United States with the noun "empire" rather than the adjective "imperial" was a step more than most establishment intellectuals were willing to take. It put the focus not on the excesses of rogue executives but on the essence, the life being, of a nation conceived in expansion, born into slavery and eliminationist violence, and raised to believe that its will to infinity represented the general interests and best hopes of all humankind.

No one was more associated with such a position than William Appleman Williams, a professor of history first at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, then at Oregon State, and who also, from the 1950s through the '80s, wrote for *The Nation*. It would be impossible to overstate Williams's importance. His most famous book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, was published in 1959. This meant that well before the United States dove deeper into Vietnam, before Nixon and Kissinger started bombing Laos and Cambodia, before Washington reacted to the Cuban Revolution as if it were Petrograd 1917 and imposed its embargo, a generation of New Left scholar-activists had a powerful framework not just to morally condemn but to analytically dissect American foreign policy.

Williams is known for a number of specific historical arguments. But his most important contribution was to identify foreign relations as the arena where competing moral ideas concerning how best to organize society got worked out. Over the long course of US history, Williams argued, liberalism's prime contradictions—between, for instance, the general good and self-interest, or society and private property—were harmonized through constant expansion, first territorially, then economically. Empire, he wrote, "was the only way to honor avarice and morality. The only way to be good and wealthy." (Williams was well ahead of his time: it has only been in the last decade that intellectual historians have begun to look at liberalism's relationship to empire.)

At Madison and elsewhere, his influence was felt inside academia and out, among a diverse roster of students, activists and independent intellectuals who presided over a renaissance of American thought, including Herbert Gutman, Walter LaFeber, Lloyd Gardner, Martin Sklar, James Livingston, James Weinstein and Eleanor Hakim, as well as the founders and early fellows of the Institute for Policy Studies: Marcus Raskin, Richard Barnet, Eqbal Ahmad and Saul Landau. Established in 1963, IPS became closely allied with *The Nation*, institutionalizing Williams’s scholarship in its policy recommendations. When the economist Robert Heilbroner, in a 1967 *Commentary* essay, called the United States a “counterrevolutionary” force in the world, he was ventriloquizing Williams. To find an intellectual today doing the work that Williams did in his time—one who could fluently combine diplomatic history, attention to large-scale social transformation and ideological critique—you’d have to splice together Andrew Bacevich, Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Said.



Williams did for *The Nation* pretty much what he did for American historiography. Starting in the 1920s, writers like Ernest Gruening and Carleton Beals provided sharp-edged reporting on what they openly called “American imperialism,” in Nicaragua, Haiti, Cuba and elsewhere. But this tradition, like Progressivism more broadly, had grown ineffective by the early Cold War, not just because of the era’s conformity but also owing to its own (at times) flat-footed economism. Williams fortified the magazine’s foreign-policy skepticism with an attention to ideology, psychology and culture capable of withstanding ongoing assaults by Cold War liberals, who charged that the magazine was too soft on communism. His presence was felt not just in his own reviews and essays, but in the work of other *Nation* contributors whom he directly influenced, among them Raskin, Barnet, Ahmad, Landau, Gar Alperovitz, Paul Buhle, Marilyn Young and Gabriel Kolko. That *The Nation* never gave up its opposition to militarism and war (unlike the way, say, *The New Republic* accommodated itself to Reaganism), and that it continues to publish investigative journalists like Jeremy Scahill and Nick Turse, owes much to Williams.

In August 1980, *The Nation* ran an extended excerpt from what turned out to be Williams’s last book, *Empire as a Way of Life*, and distributed the issue to delegates at the Democratic National Convention, held that month in New York’s Madison Square Garden. It was meant to animate the party’s anti-imperialists, united behind Edward Kennedy’s insurgent challenge to Jimmy Carter. But the selection—and the book itself—read like an elegiac prose poem, pessimistic and paralyzing. Here, the “dialectical tension” Williams explored in his earlier work didn’t so much progress as unspool, providing no traction for dissent, no contradiction that could be leveraged to resist empire. The dispossessors became the dispossessed, stripped of the ability to think of themselves as social beings. Marx believed that the increased rates of exploitation involved in the labor process led to a steady expansion of human consciousness, but Williams argued that empire reversed the process: the constant quest for “surplus social space” resulted in self-barbarization and a deep anti-intellectual individualism.

The waning McGovernites, fighting Carter’s veer to the right, were still calling on America to “come home.” Williams told them there was no home that wasn’t already, and always, interpenetrated by empire. *Empire as a Way of Life* was airtight and all-pervasive, a canonization of denial and delusion: “No candor, more flight from reality. More flight, no peace. No chance.”

Cancer took Williams in March 1990, and for a short while Cold War triumphalism seemed to controvert his jeremiad. But the United States started bombing Iraq a few months after his death and hasn’t stopped since. And here we are, living not the tragedy of American diplomacy but empire burlesque, supporting rebels on one side of the Iraqi-Syrian border and fighting those same rebels on the other.

Williams taught that domestic reform in America has always been paid for with imperial expansion. In the mid-1800s, the federal fight against slavery went hand in hand with the fight against Native Americans and the final drive west. Progressives and New Dealers could use the government to distribute wealth a bit more equitably only if they also used it to open the world’s markets to American corporations. And in the 1960s, Lyndon Johnson couldn’t get the congressional votes for the Great Society unless he stood “firm on the frontier” in Vietnam.

Williams didn’t live long enough to fully see the way the New Right switched the terms, reviving militarism to dismantle as many of those domestic reforms as possible. This is the “bizarre reality” that Ferguson and Rogers identified, which stands the meaning of “freedom” on its head. It would be easy to see Obama’s technocratic pragmatism as one more turn of the imperial wheel. He’s tried to make the deal, offering up drones and global counterinsurgency (by some estimates, the United States is involved in seventy-four foreign conflicts; Turse counts 134. Who knows?) in the hope of winning mild reform at home. But he is operating in a vastly changed context, having had the ground cut out from under him by his neoliberal and neocon predecessors. He can opt for war—as he has—but he can’t reap the dividends of empire.

So we have paralysis abroad and paralysis at home, a situation that might finally provide the answer to the question that Williams asked thirty-five years ago in *The Nation*: “Is the idea and reality of America possible without empire?”

> *“Why should anyone be surprised that when given a choice between [right-wing politicians and] the vacillating, unprincipled performance of those professional liberals who constantly sell out to the right in order to preserve a mythical ‘vital center,’ the voters decide to opt for the real thing?”*
>
> –Editorial on Ronald Reagan, November 15, 1980

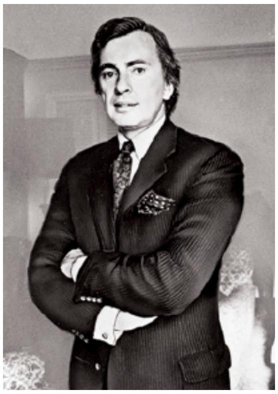
ILLUSTRATIONS: ABOVE, HORACIO CARDO; LEFT, ROBERT GROSSMAN

Some Jews & *the* Gays

GORE VIDAL

NOVEMBER 14, 1981

In a letter to a friend, George Orwell wrote, "It is impossible to mention Jews in print, either favorably or unfavorably, without getting into trouble." But there are times when trouble had better be got into before mere trouble turns into catastrophe. Jews, blacks and homosexualists are despised by the Christian and Communist majorities of East and West. Also, as a result of the invention of Israel, Jews can now count on the hatred of the Islamic world. Since our own Christian majority looks to be getting ready for great adventures at home and abroad, I would suggest that the three despised minorities join forces in order not to be destroyed. This seems an obvious thing to do. Unfortunately, most Jews refuse to see any similarity between their special situation and that of the same-sexers. At one level, the Jews are perfectly correct. A racial or religious or tribal identity is a kind of fact. Although sexual preference is an even more powerful fact, it is not one that creates any particular social or cultural or religious bond between those so-minded.



So there is a difference between the two estates. But there is no difference in the degree of hatred felt by the Christian majority for Christ-killers and Sodomites. In the German concentration camps, Jews wore yellow stars while homosexualists wore pink lambdas. I was present when Christopher Isherwood tried to make this point to a young Jewish movie producer. "After all," said Isherwood, "Hitler killed 600,000 homosexuals." The young man was not impressed. "But Hitler killed six *million* Jews," he said sternly. "What are you?" asked Isherwood. "In real estate?"

Like it or not, Jews and homosexualists are in the same fragile boat, and one would have to be pretty obtuse not to see the common danger. A case in point is that of Mrs. Norman Podhoretz, also known as Midge Decter. In September of last year, Decter published a piece called "The Boys on the Beach" in her husband's magazine, *Commentary*. Decter tells us that twenty years ago, she got to know a lot of pansies at a resort called Fire Island Pines, where she and a number of other persons used to make it during the summers. She estimates that 40 percent of the summer people were heterosexual; the rest were not. Yet the "denizens, homosexual and heterosexual alike, were predominantly professionals and people in soft, marginal businesses—lawyers, advertising executives, psychotherapists, actors, editors, writers, publishers, gallery owners, designers, decorators, etc."

Decter is now amazed at the recent changes in the boys on the beach. Why have they become so militant—and so ill groomed? "What indeed has happened to the homosexual community I used to know—they who only a few short years ago [as opposed to those manly 370-day years] were characterized by nothing so much as a sweet, vain, pouting, girlish attention to the youth and beauty of their bodies?"

Herewith the burden of "The Boys on the Beach": since homosexualists choose to be the way they are out of idle hatefulness, it has been a mistake to allow them to come out of the closet to the extent that they have, but now that they are out (which most are not), they will have no choice but to face up to their essential hatefulness and abnormality and so be driven to kill themselves with promiscuity, drugs, S-M and suicide. Not even the authors of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* ever suggested that the Jews, who were so hateful to them, were also hateful to themselves. So Decter has managed to go one step further than the *Protocols'* authors; she is indeed a virtuoso of hate, and thus do pogroms begin.

Solidarity—Lest We Forget

DANIEL SINGER

JULY 3, 1982

Those on the left who cherished the illusion that Poland would somehow vanish from the news and that Solidarity would disappear from our political consciousness have been disappointed. A wave of strikes and skirmishes with the police spread throughout Poland recently in defiance of martial law; the situation in Poland must again be watched with the faint hope of a compromise and the very real fear of a bloody explosion.

The Polish story is far from finished. Its impact on socialists in the West, already significant, will increase in coming months. [One] problem is the temptation on the left to treat the enemies of our enemies as our friends. I encountered this attitude in Poland before Jaruzelski's coup among spokesmen for Solidarity who were reluctant to criticize American imperialism or Reagan's cold-war policies in El Salvador. I discovered it in the United States among left wingers who, having duly condemned the coup, were trying to push Poland into the background so as to be able "to get on with the job." Their reluctance to keep the moral heat on the Soviet Union may sometimes spring from the best of reasons—e.g., the belief that one should give priority to the fight against home-grown imperialism. Yet too many scandals have been ignored in the name of clearing out the weeds in our own garden. Another wave of political blindness to crimes perpe-

Solidarność

Solidarity, founded in 1980, was the first free trade union to exist in a Soviet-bloc country. In 1981, the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law to suppress it. "Democracy is still a distant dream for Poland," *The Nation* had noted that same year.

PHOTOS: AP

trated in the Soviet bloc would be neither forgiven nor forgivable.

Nor does an understandable distaste for our strange political bedfellows justify a mood of withdrawal. The love of the Reagans and the Thatchers for the Polish workers is nauseating. It is easy, however, to show up their hypocrisy for what it is. We need merely demand that Solidarity's conservative sympathizers follow its example and proclaim that all factories and offices should be run by the workers. It is not difficult to imagine the reactions to such a proposal on Wall Street or in corporate board rooms.

But there is a simpler reason that we cannot stand pure and aloof. Unfortunately, we are not yet numerous enough to win victories on our own. Virtue does not lie only in splendid isolation, or vice in sharing platforms or seeking allies. The slippery road begins when we conceal our principles in order to be accepted or worship alien gods to preserve an unholy alliance.

Which brings us to the heart of the matter—the American left's reluctance to curse the two superpowers with equal vigor. Apparently, its conditioned reflexes are strong, for many people on the non-Communist left still seem to view Russia, however oppressive, as somehow socialist, and, however "bureaucratically degenerated," as a workers' state. To say that the United States and the Soviet Union both stink is not to equate the epitome of capitalism with the center of postrevolutionary oppression. It simply means that neither country can be described as the kind of society we are striving for.

The Western left must back Solidarity for more than moral reasons; there are also pedagogical reasons for supporting it. For millions of people socialism in Warsaw or Budapest or Prague is now identified with Soviet tanks; it is being confused with the corrupt and oppressive powers that be. Ideally, we could break the bewildering identification of socialism with Brezhnevism by providing a genuine socialism as an alternative. At the bare minimum, we must prove to our potential partners that socialists side with the victimized workers and not with their jackbooted oppressors.

***NATION* CONTROVERSY**

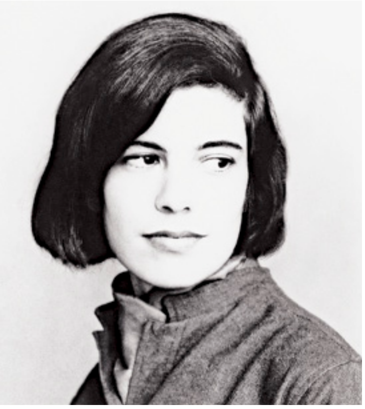


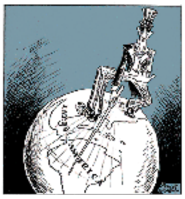
PHOTO: AP

Susan Sontag, at a pro-Solidarity event sponsored by *The Nation* on February 6, 1982, argued that the left had become too lenient toward Soviet-style communism, which she called "fascism with a human face." Sontag asserted that *Nation* readers were less "informed about the realities of Communism" than those of *Reader's Digest*, asking: "Can it be that our enemies were right?" *The Nation* ran her remarks, along with responses by Diana Trilling, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Singer and Phil Pochoda, who called Sontag one of the left's "most valued assets" and hoped that she wouldn't end up as "Norman Podhoretz with a human face."

ART ARCHIVE

Latin America

Robert Grossman, August 22, 1981



Opposing the Reagan administration's support for right-wing dictatorships and death squads in Central and South America was among *The Nation*'s most urgent concerns throughout the 1980s. It also inspired some of the most spirited internal debates in the magazine's history.

After the Breadwinner Vanishes

BARBARA EHRENREICH

February 26, 1983

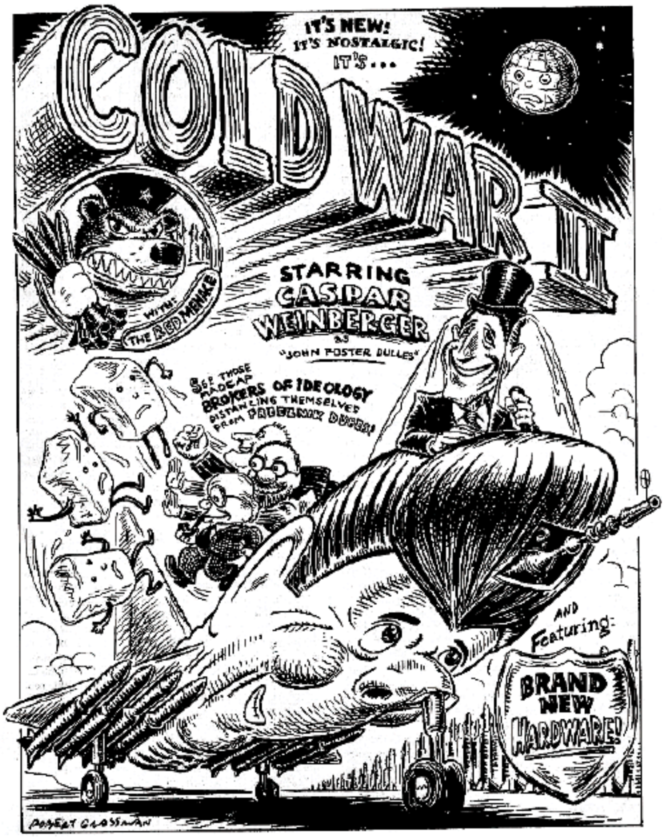
In popular wisdom, it was women, and especially feminists, who brought about "the breakdown of the family." What has gone almost unnoticed is that men too have changed. In the last three decades, men have come to see themselves less and less as breadwinners, and have ceased to measure their masculinity through their success as husbands and providers.

This drastic change in men, and in our cultural expectations of them, has been ignored, downplayed or else buried under the weary rubric of "changing sex roles." Our expectations of adult womanhood have also altered dramatically in the last thirty years. The old feminine ideal—the full-time housewife with station wagon and suburban ranch house—has been largely replaced by the career woman with skirted suit and attaché case. The collapse of the breadwinner ethic, and with it the notion of long-term emotional responsibility toward women, affects not only the homemaker who could be cut loose into poverty but the financially self-sufficient working woman. We face the prospect of briefer "relationships," punctuated by emotional dislocations and seldom offering the kind of loyalty that might extend into middle age. If we accept the male revolt as a *fait accompli* and begin to act on its economic consequences for women, are we not in some way giving up on men? Are we acquiescing to a future in which men will always be transients in the lives of women, and never fully members of the human family?

I would like to think that a reconciliation between the sexes is still possible. In fact, so long as we have sons as well as daughters, it will have to happen. "Grown-up," in the case of men, should have some meaning for a boy other than "gone away"; and adulthood should mean more than moral vagrancy. If we cannot have—and do not want—a binding pact between the sexes, we still must have one between the generations, and that means there must be a renewal of loyalty and trust between adult men and women. But what would be the terms of such a reconciliation? We cannot go back to a world where maturity meant "settling," often in stifled desperation, for a life perceived as a "role." Nor can we accept the nightmare anomie of the pop psychologists' vision: a world where other people are objects of consumption, a world of chance encounters of a "self" propelled by impulse alone.

I see no other ethical basis for a reconciliation than the feminist principle that women are also persons, with the same need for respect, for satisfying work, for love and for pleasure as men. In a "world without a father," that is, without the private system of paternalism built into the family-wage system, we will have to learn to be brothers and sisters.

I hope we might meet as rebels together—not against one another, but against a social order that condemns so many of us to meaningless or degrading work in return for a glimpse of commodified pleasures, and condemns all of us to the prospect of mass annihilation. If we can make a common commitment to ourselves and future generations, then it may also be possible to rebuild the notion of *personal* commitment, and to give new strength and shared meaning to the words we have lost—responsibility, maturity and even, perhaps, manliness.



ROBERT GROSSMAN

East, West—
Is There a Third Way?

E.P. THOMPSON

JULY 10, 1982

What, we must ask as we proceed into the 1980s, is the cold war all about? It is about itself. The cold war may be seen as a show put on by two rival entrepreneurs. The show has grown bigger and bigger; the entrepreneurs have lost control of it, as it has thrown up its own managers, administrators, producers and a huge supporting cast, all of whom have a direct interest in its continuance, in its enlargement. Whatever happens, the show must go on.

The cold war has become a habit, an addiction, supported by very powerful material interests in each bloc. Yet a contradiction has arisen. Today's military confrontation has been protracted long after the reasons for it have vanished into history. If the cold war is at once obsolete and inexorable—an ongoing, self-reproducing road show that has become necessary to ruling groups on both sides—can we find, within that contradiction, any resolution short of war?

A general revolt of reason and conscience against the instruments which immediately threaten us—a perception, informing multitudes, of the human ecological imperative—this is a necessary part of the answer. For if the cold war has acquired a self-generating dynamic, then as soon as public concern is quieted by a few measures of arms control, new dangers and new weapons will appear. We must do more than protest if we are to survive.

How do we put the causes of freedom and of peace back together? This cannot be done by provocative interventions in the affairs of other nations. No popular movements in the East will ever obtain civil or trade union rights because the West is pressing missiles against their country's borders. On the contrary, this only enhances the security operations and the security-minded ideology of their rulers. What is needed, from and for all of us, is a space free from cold war crisis in which we can move.

A transcontinental discourse must begin to flow, in both directions, with the peace movement—a movement of unofficial people with a code of conduct which disallows the pursuit of political advantage for either side—as the conduit. There would not be decades of détente, as the glaciers slowly melt. There would be very rapid and unpredictable changes: nations would become unglued from their alliances; there would be sharp conflicts within nations; there would be successive risks. We could roll up the map of the cold war and travel without maps for a while.

Our species has been favored on this planet, although we have not always been good caretakers of our globe's resources. Our stay here, in geological time, has been brief. No one can tell us our business. But I think it is something more than to consume as much as we can and then blow the place up.

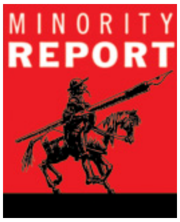
We did not choose to live in this time. But there is no way of getting out of it. And it has given us as significant a cause as has ever been known, a moment of opportunity which might never be renewed. The opportunity is now, when there is already an enhanced consciousness of danger informing millions. We can match this crisis only by a summoning of resources to a height like that attained by the greatest religious or political movements of Europe's past. I think of 1944 and of the crest of the Resistance. There must be that kind of spirit abroad once more. But this time it must arise not in the wake of war and repression, but before these take place. Five minutes afterward, and it will be too late. Humankind must at last grow up.

Terrorism and Its Discontents

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

AUGUST 3, 1985

Terrorism threatens to emerge as one of the great junk subjects of our era. It has already generated numerous junk seminars, endless junk TV shows, about half a dozen junk tanks and countless junk speeches and junk books. Plus which, it has evolved a whole breed of cretinous monomaniacs—junk experts—who fill the screens and the Op-Ed pages with their junk lucubrations. Herewith, then, my two cents' worth of junk reflections.



"Terrorism" was a buzzword of the Reaganites from the start. I remember attending a debate in 1981 in which the reactionary side was taken by a man named Constantine Menges. The fact that Menges now directs terrorist operations against Nicaragua from the safety of the National Security Council is both here and there. Asked by Alexander Cockburn to give a definition of "terrorism," he thought for a bit and defined terrorism as "the use of violence for political ends."

The fatuity of this encapsulation, which would include everybody except absolute pacifists within its terms, is at least a faint improvement on the definition advanced by Menges's new employers. They define terrorism as "the use by some people of violence for some political ends." This merely adds hypocrisy to tautology.

One can define a terrorist as someone who possesses the following qualities. His chief targets must be civilians and noncombatants (not always the same thing), and there must be a political reason why they are his prey. His cause must be a hopeless one. He must be without a realizable manifesto, program or objective. In other words, violence must be his end as well as his means.

Does anybody fit this bizarre profile? Yes, just as many who are supposed to fit it do not. All states and all armies employ terror, but they do not, except in rare cases, depend solely on its use. Many nationalist movements, such as the Irgun, the I.R.A., the P.L.O. and others, have also employed violence against noncombatants in the course of operations, but cannot be reduced to the definition of "terrorist" *tout court*.

Following this logic, one can define the Red Brigades in Italy, the Baader-Meinhof group in Germany and the Japanese Red Army as terrorist. The declared intention of these groups was to provoke the state into taking fascist measures, the better to bring about the revolution. Interestingly, all three were made up of young people whose parents had lived under or been complicit with Axis regimes. And there was an echo of Third Period Stalinism in their politics too—the Stalinists in Germany and elsewhere who had said, in the greatest political betrayal of this century, "After Hitler, us."

It was against this kind of thinking and this method that the early Marxists wrote their sternest polemics. The Narodniks, the anarchists of "propaganda by deed" and the practitioners of assassination and provocation, were condemned, not so much morally (no state or party has the moral right to condemn the use of violence) as because they engendered secrecy, conspiracy, sadism and despair. They also invited, as they often meant to, appalling state reprisals on open, democratic associations of working people.

The older and better name for terrorism is nihilism. The nihilist cannot be placated or satisfied. Like the Party of God, he wants nothing less than the impossible or the unthinkable. This is what distinguishes him from the revolutionary. And this is what he has in common with the rulers of our world, who subject us to lectures about the need to oppose terrorism while they prepare, daily and hourly, for the annihilation of us all. Those who contemplate the thermonuclear extinction of the species "for political ends" have nothing to learn from the nihilist tradition.

The Nation.
Three More Years?
THE STATE OF THE PARTIES

[February 7, 1994]

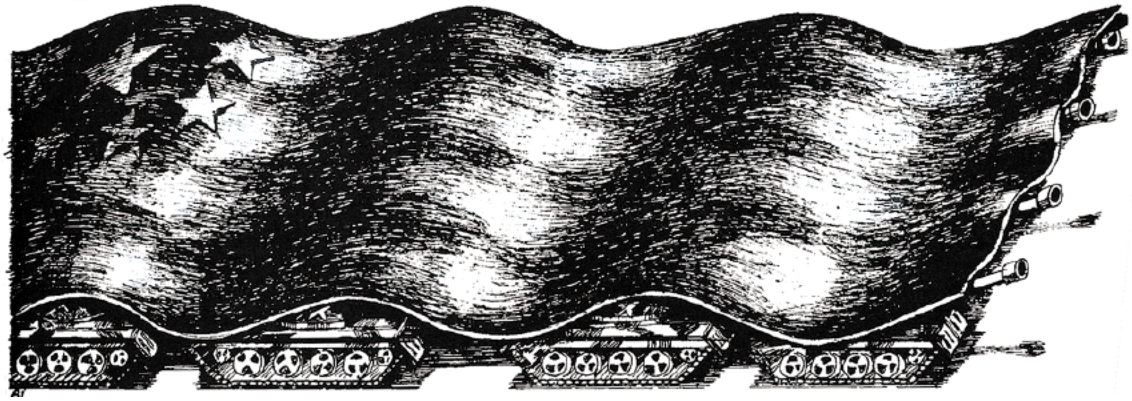
3-4-1987
President Reagan accepts "full responsibility" for the Iran/Contra scandal. "It will not be so easy to wean the arbiters of foreign policy from the principle of intervention," *The Nation* notes. "Americans remain addicted to the style and swagger of imperial adventure."

10-19-1987
The stock market crashes. "The whole country is in hock," observes I.F. Stone, newly returned to *The Nation*'s fold, in "End of a Profligate Era."

ART ARCHIVE

The Bloody Road to Tiananmen

Ai Weiwei, June 11, 1990



COVER: ROBBIE CONAL

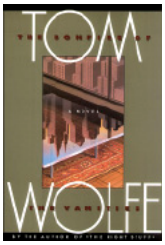
Delirious New York

Review of The Bonfire of the Vanities, *by Tom Wolfe, and* In Search of New York: A Special Issue of *Dissent, edited by Jim Sleeper*

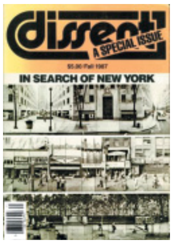
JOHN LEONARD

NOVEMBER 28, 1987

We live in this imaginary city, a novel that needs a rewrite, where the only politicians not in jail probably ought to be, except for Ruth Messinger, and all of them are Democrats; where the unions don't care, and the schools don't work, and the cops deal drugs, and the Mayor has his own foreign policy, and I can't leave home without stepping over the body of a runaway or a derelict. We didn't elect Felix Rohatyn to anything, but the Municipal Assistance Corporation is more important than the City Council. Nor did we vote for Steinbrenner, Trump or the rest of the bullies and crybabies who bray on our battlements and wave the bloody pennants of their imperial omophagous selves; and because none of these heroes ever takes the subway, there's no one to shoot them. Maybe we need Jeremiah more than we need Tom Wolfe or a bunch of disappointed intellectuals.



But Wolfe and *Dissent* have written their New York City novels anyway. Wolfe, the parajournalist, looks pretty much the same as always, still grinning at us out of the nimbus of his double-breasted signature white suit, a vanilla-colored Mau Mau. *Dissent*, on the other hand, has had a format face-lift and for the first time in thirty-three years you can read the socialist quarterly without an O.E.D. magnifying glass. In both their novels, the underclass is the stuff of dreams, the return of the repressed, a history-making black magic. They disagree, of course, on whether this is a good thing. Listen to Wolfe: "You don't think the future knows how to cross a *bridge*.... Do you really think you're insulated from the *Third World*?"



Dissent wants this very same Third World—2.5 million "newcomers" since 1965—to be an energizing principle. In diversity we've always found our jumping beans. From the abrasions of culture on culture, we rub up a public philosophy and a civic space. Surely these new immigrants, this ethnic muscle, will rescue us from a mood grown "sullen, as if in contempt of earlier feelings and visions" and "a peculiar kind of social nastiness" (Irving Howe); a "trained incapacity to see the city as a human environment, or as anything more than a machine for generating money" (Marshall Berman); "a way of life that is not much better than jungle warfare" (Ada Louise Huxtable); and "a world devised in its entirety by Dostoevski's Smerdyakov" (Paula Fox).

It's odd that Wolfe is so much better than *Dissent* on the details of class animus. Whereas *Dissent* can barely bring itself to mention the cops, Wolfe goes underground into the criminal justice system, where the hatred is naked. If *Dissent* is too polite these days to call anybody an out-and-out racist, Wolfe has been to some fancy dinner parties and taken notes, and bites the hand that scratches his ears. It's equally odd that Ed Koch, who certainly deserves it, is all over the pages of *Dissent*, while Wolfe entirely ignores him. A New York novel without Koch is like a court without a Sun King.

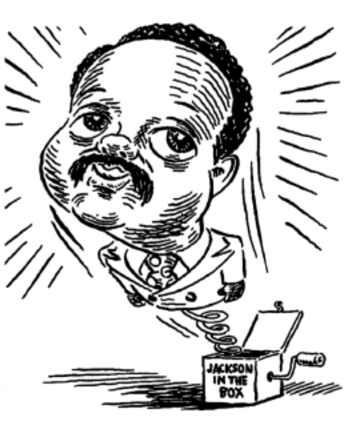
But there are many oddities. Neither New York novel has much of anything to say about drugs or organized crime. Both mention Alexander Cockburn.

For Jesse Jackson and His Campaign

EDITORIAL (ANDREW KOPKIND)

APRIL 16, 1988

Jesse Jackson is a serious candidate for the presidency. He was always serious; it was just the press, the political scientists and the other politicians who belittled his campaign, trivialized his efforts and disdained his prospects. Despite the contempt and condescension of the media—or perhaps because of it—Jackson went to the most remote and isolated grass roots in the American social landscape to find the strength for a campaign that has already begun to transform politics. For five years his distance from the funders, the managers, the mediators and the consultants who manipulate the Democratic Party and legitimize its candidates has allowed Jackson to do unimaginable things and say unspeakable words—about race, about class, about equality and, indeed, about democracy. To an extent that may be unique in presidential elections in this century, he derives his power from the people. The enormous energy that his campaign releases has created a new populist moment, overtaking the languid hours and dull days of conventional politics and imagining possibilities for substantial change beyond the usual incremental transactions of the two-party system. It offers hope against cynicism, power against prejudice and solidarity against division. It is the specific antithesis to Reaganism and reaction, which, with the shameful acquiescence of the Democratic center, have held America in their thrall for most of this decade and which must now be defeated. For that reason, *The Nation* is endorsing Jesse Jackson for the Democratic nomination for President.



The Jackson campaign is not a single shot at higher office by an already elevated politician. Rather, it is a continuing, expanding, open-ended project to organize a movement for the political empowerment of all those who participate. In the beginning, Jackson identified his basic constituency as the most "dispossessed and disaffected" Americans of all, the blacks of the rural South and the Northern ghettos, people who seemed permanently disenfranchised from citizenship and thus denied entrance into the

ILLUSTRATIONS: RIGHT, ROBERT GROSSMAN; ABOVE, ERIC DROOKER

system of rewards and privileges that is every citizen's right. In a real sense, the campaign became a new civil rights movement with an added dimension of economic justice deriving in spirit from the last campaigns of Martin Luther King Jr. with the black working poor.

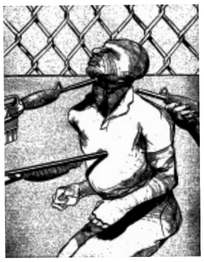
As the Rainbow Coalition reaches beyond its primary constituency to include an array of new ones, the values espoused are incorporated into the growing movement. When unionists, feminists, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, students, civil libertarians and community activists join or endorse the Rainbow campaign, they contribute their ideals and their energies while they share the coalition's strength. The results are startling. Farmers from Iowa campaign in black Chicago, white ethnic hard-hats and young gays and lesbians work together in northern Wisconsin, genteel peace activists and black hip-hoppers leaflet in the projects of Hartford. The culture of American politics is being radically reformed.

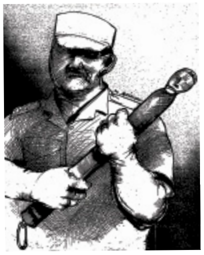
We believe the importance of a black candidacy for President and a progressive movement for change in America overshadows any deficiencies in Jackson's résumé and the faults in his campaign. Racism may be as American as cherry pie, but it is a poisonous portion that fouls every dream and deforms every vision. For *The Nation*, the Jackson campaign now embodies what we believe is necessary and just for America, and we are proud to stand with it.

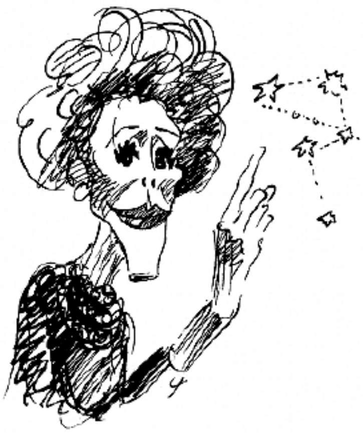
ART ARCHIVE

Facing South Africa

Marshall Arisman, November 22, 1986







The Stars Were Their Alibi

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

MAY 21, 1988

There has been a commotion over the disclosure by former White House chief of staff Don Regan that important White House decisions have been consequent upon the analysis of Joan Quigley, a soothsayer in San Francisco, and that Nancy Reagan would never permit her husband to leave home without one or even two time-and-motion studies by this same soothsayer.

Much of the clucking is being done by people who themselves turn zealously to their favored horoscope. The United States retains, unusually for an advanced industrial society, about the same level of religious superstition as Bangladesh. It is scarcely news that the President is in the mainstream of popular American credulity. He has been nurtured in the same rich loam of folk ignorance, historical figment and paranormal intellectual constructs as millions of his fellow citizens. Nor has Reagan been shy in disclosing that he believes that Armageddon may occur "in our lifetime," at which point the elect will defy elementary principles of thermodynamics and rise to heaven in a kind of celestial waterspout, leaving the sinners to burn below.

Regan, at one time the Secretary of the Treasury, reveals that in his four years at that post he never once enjoyed a one-on-one colloquy with the chief executive and that in the devising of economic policy, "I was flying by the seat of my pants." In fact his pants were under strict orders from Mission Control, in the form of the Federal Reserve's Paul Volcker, who was the effective president for most of Reagan's tenure. Even so, there is no reason to suppose that Quigley's counsel was inferior to that of analysts following more orthodox routes of economic prediction. As Regan himself well knows, the investment strategies of many Wall Street players follow what is called "random walk" patterns of speculation, which concede the superiority of chance, within a finite range of alternatives, to human intellection.

The image of two women, one of them peering into a crystal ball, guiding the policies of the United States, is irresistible in prompting coarse calumnies both on the termagant Nancy and her pliant husband's abdication of executive responsibility. But reflection should excite a more kindly analysis. She apparently had Quigley draw up Mikhail Gorbachev's chart, the better to understand the prophet of glasnost. To judge by such examples of their work as were released at the time of Watergate, it was probably superior in penetration to the profile of the Soviet leader prepared by the C.I.A.'s team of psychiatrists. It certainly seems to have persuaded Ron that here at last was a man he could do business with.

Astrology is entirely consonant with Reaganism, representing negation of the moral sense, abdication of initiative to the motions of the planets as parsed by the precise time and whereabouts of Ronald Reagan's birth. So astrology is therefore the twinkling penumbra of Reagan's incandescent belief in the motions of the "free market." Submission to the "laws" of this same utterly imaginary free market permits him and his fellow believers (a fair slice of the ruling class) to argue that intervention in the market's mysterious workings, to subsidize the needy or house the homeless, is to tinker with an inspired mechanism and court disaster.

ART ARCHIVE

The Power of Positive Thinking

David Shannon, April 2, 1990

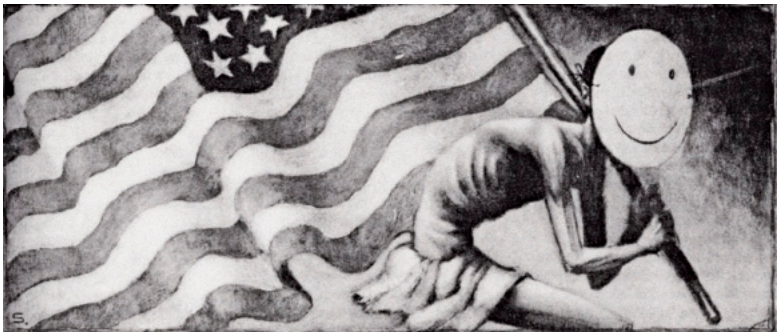
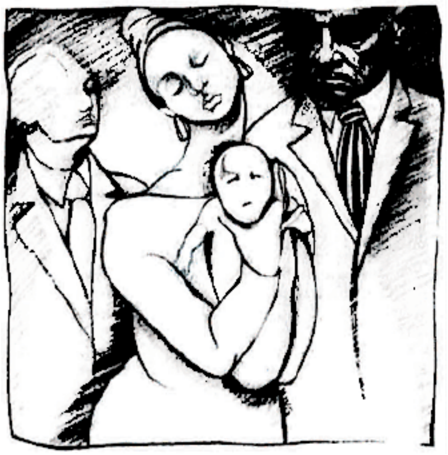


ILLUSTRATION (NANCY REAGAN): EDWARD SOREL

What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?

ALICE WALKER

May 22, 1989



What can the white man say to the black woman?

For four hundred years he ruled over the black woman's womb.

In the barracoons and along the slave shipping coasts of Africa, for more than twenty generations, it was he who dashed our babies' brains out against the rocks.

What can the white man say to the black woman?

For four hundred years he determined which black woman's children would live or die.

It was he who placed our children on the auction block in cities all across the eastern half of what is now the United States, and watched them beg for their mothers' arms, before being sold to the highest bidder and dragged away.

What has the white man to say to the black woman, and to all women and children everywhere?

Let us consider the depletion of the ozone; let us consider homelessness and the nuclear peril; let us consider the destruction of the rain forests—in the name of the almighty hamburger. Let us consider the poisoned apples and the poisoned water and the poisoned air and the poisoned earth.

Abortion, for many women, is more than an experience of suffering beyond anything most men will ever know; it is an act of mercy, and an act of self-defense.

To make abortion illegal again is to sentence millions of women and children to miserable lives and even more miserable deaths.

Given his history, in relation to us, I think the white man should be ashamed to attempt to speak for the unborn children of the black woman. To force us to have children for him to ridicule, drug and turn into killers and homeless wanderers is a testament to his hypocrisy.

What can the white man say to the black woman?

Only one thing that the black woman might hear.

Yes, indeed, the white man can say, your children have the right to life. Therefore I will call back from the dead those 30 million who were tossed overboard during the centuries of the slave trade. And the other millions who died in my cotton fields and hanging from my trees.

I will recall all those who died of broken hearts and broken spirits, under the insult of segregation.

I will tell you, black woman, that I wish to be forgiven the sins I commit daily against you and your children. For I know that until I treat your children with love, I can never be trusted by my own. Nor can I respect myself. I will look at your children and see not a threat but a joy.

I will remove myself as an obstacle in the path that your children, against all odds, are making toward the light. I will not assassinate them for dreaming dreams and offering new visions of how to live. I will cease trying to lead your children, for I can see I have never understood where I was going. I will agree to sit quietly for a century or so, and meditate on this.

This is what the white man can say to the black woman.

We are listening.

Maggie Stumbles

EDWARD MILIBAND

April 16, 1990

Middle England is stirring. On March 22 the constituency of Mid-Staffordshire, a Conservative bastion, fell to the opposition Labor Party—its greatest by-election triumph since 1935. While this result may not be an accurate guide to the outcome of the next general election, by-elections do reflect the political mood of the country. Today, with opinion polls showing a Labor lead of as much as 28 percent, the weather vane is set hard against Margaret Thatcher.

The public perception is that Thatcher has gone too far. In the past, people ignored the Conservatives' obvious contempt for the principles of the welfare state because of the short-term economic gains that Thatcher brought to many of those who had work. Now, concurrent with economic decline, they begin to look at what she has done to Britain's social fabric. That is why Labor's bland slogan in Mid-Staffordshire, "Vote for what you value," was successful—there is a growing sense among Britons that what they value is under attack from the Conservative Party.

Beneath the discontent with Thatcher is a growing rejection of the "enterprise culture" she has promoted. The popular verdict now is that this has not only failed to address Britain's long-term economic decline but has also brought an era of social decay and disintegration. Consequently, the traditional post-war enthusiasm for the welfare state is fast re-emerging as a central factor in British politics.

The prime beneficiary of this mood is the Labor Party, the only alternative to Thatcherism after the collapse of the small center parties. But just how much of an alternative is Labor? Its leaders do continue to speak the language of social concern, yet their strategy is marked by extreme caution, an avoidance of any appearance of radicalism and a reluctance to argue for anything that might not command majority opinion-poll support. Of course, because of the government's combination of dogmatism and ineptitude, this may not matter in opposition. But in power?

ILLUSTRATIONS: RIGHT, MONICA INCISA; ABOVE, THERESA KING

Are Women Morally Superior to Men?

KATHA POLLITT

DECEMBER 28, 1992

The ascription of particular virtues—compassion, patience, common sense, nonviolence—to mothers, and the tendency to conflate "mothers" with "women," has a long history in the peace movement but goes way beyond issues of war and peace. At present it permeates discussions of just about every field. Business writers wonder if women's nurturing, intuitive qualities will make them better executives. Educators suggest that female students suffer in classrooms that emphasize competition over cooperation. Women politicians tout their playground-honed negotiating skills, their egoless devotion to public service, their gender-based commitment to fairness and caring. A variety of political causes—environmentalism, animal rights, even vegetarianism—are promoted as logical extensions of women's putative peacefulness, closeness to nature, horror of aggression and concern for others' health. In the arts, we hear a lot about what women's "real" subjects, methods and materials ought to be. Painting is male. Rhyme is male. Plot is male. Perhaps, say the Lacanian feminists, even logic and language are male. What is female? Nature. Blood. Milk. Communal gatherings. The moon. Quilts.

Haven't we been here before? Woman as sharer and carer, woman as earth mother, woman as guardian of all the small rituals that knit together a family and a community, woman as beneath, above or beyond such manly concerns as law, reason, abstract ideas—these images are as old as time. Open defenders of male supremacy have always used them to declare women flatly inferior to men; covert ones use them to place women on a pedestal as too good for this naughty world.

There exists an equally ancient line of thought, however, that uses femininity to posit a subversive challenge to the social order. For reasons of power, money and persistent social structures, the vision of the morally superior woman can never overcome the dominant ethos in reality but exists alongside it as a kind of permanent wish or hope: If only powerful and powerless could change places, and the meek inherit the earth! Thus, it is perpetually being rediscovered and presented as a radical new idea.

Although it is couched in the language of praise, difference feminism is demeaning to women. It asks that women be admitted into public life and public discourse not because they have a right to be there but because they will improve them. Why should the task of moral and social transformation be laid on women's doorstep and not on everyone's—or, for that matter, on men's, by the you-broke-it-you-fix-it principle. Peace, the environment, a more humane workplace, economic justice, social support for children—these issues are everyone's responsibility.

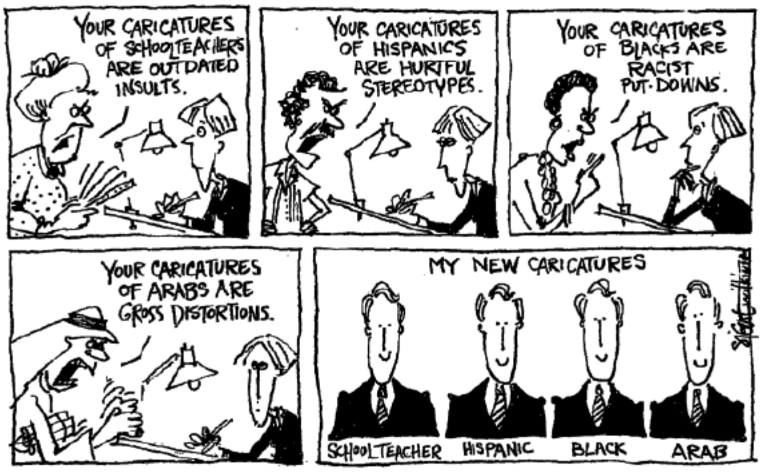
No one asks that other oppressed groups win their freedom by claiming to be extra-good. Only for women is simple justice insufficient. It is as though women don't believe they are entitled to full citizenship unless they can make a special claim to virtue. Why isn't being human enough?

> *"The ideological morticians are wrong in assuming that this death of an epoch heralds a capitalist eternity. The lesson of events in East Germany is that people inspired by an idea can bring down walls. Two centuries after the French Revolution there are plenty of Bastilles to be stormed."*
>
> –Editorial on the fall of the Berlin Wall, December 4, 1989

ART ARCHIVE

How Not to Offend

Signe Wilkinson, January 17, 1994



YOUR CARICATURES OF SCHOOLTEACHERS ARE OUTDATED INSULTS.
YOUR CARICATURES OF HISPANICS ARE HURTFUL STEREOTYPES.
YOUR CARICATURES OF BLACKS ARE RACIST PUT-DOWNS.
YOUR CARICATURES OF ARABS ARE GROSS DISTORTIONS.
MY NEW CARICATURES
SCHOOLTEACHER
HISPANIC
BLACK
ARAB

ILLUSTRATION: TOP, LISA BLACKSHEAR

After Stonewall

ANDREW KOPKIND

The Stonewall Inn

JULY 4, 1994

As revolutions go, the street fighting that took place around Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village on the night of June 27, 1969, lacked the splendor of the Bastille or the sweep of the Finland Station. State power did not crumble, great leaders did not appear, no clear objective was advanced. A bunch of drag queens and their friends pulled from the Stonewall bar in a police raid refused to go docilely into the paddy wagons and all hell broke loose along Christopher Street and in adjoining parks and alleys. Fighting between the queers and the cops resumed the next night, but that was the extent of the violence. And yet the Stonewall Riot must count as a transformative moment of liberation, not only for homosexuals, who were the street fighters, but for the entire sexual culture, which broke out of confinement that night as surely as gay people emerged from the closet.

Although Stonewall came at the end of a decade of convulsive change, and was informed by the struggles of black Americans, women, radical students and insurgent movements throughout the Third World, it was in many ways the purest cultural revolution of all, and the precursor of the postmodern politics of identity that proliferated in the decades to follow. Lesbians and gays are today's children of Stonewall, but many more are stepchildren or close cousins. That night a quarter of a century ago now belongs to everyone.

Lenin said somewhere that "revolutions are festivals of the oppressed," and although Stonewall wasn't remotely Leninist, it was certainly festive and it definitely was a low-down crowd that poured out of that bar. The prominence of drag queens in the vanguard of the insurgency always made theoretical sense: As one of the most marginal, disdained and isolated sectors of the homosexual world (it could not yet be called a "gay community"), the drags had the least to lose from acting out, or acting up—and perhaps the most to gain. Stonewall is often described as a narrowly constructed, exclusively gay male "happening" (in the 1960s sense), but lots of lines were crossed.

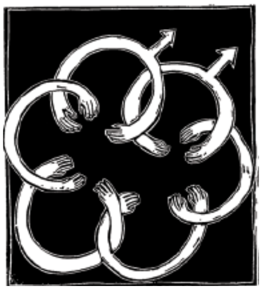
Somewhere in the existential depths of that brawl of screaming transvestites were all the freedom rides, the antiwar marches, the sit-ins, the smoke-ins, the be-ins, the consciousness-raising, the bra-burning, the levitation of the Pentagon, the endless meetings and broken hearts. Not only that, but the years of gay men and lesbians locking themselves inside windowless, unnamed bars; writing dangerous, anonymous novels and articles; lying about their identity to their families, their bosses, the military; suffering silently when they were found out; hiding and seeking and winking at each other, or drinking and dying by themselves. And sometimes, not often, braving it out and surviving. It's astonishing to think that on one early summer's night in New York that world ended, and a new one began.

A Socialism of the Skin

TONY KUSHNER

JULY 4, 1994

Is there a relationship between homosexual liberation and socialism? That's an unfashionably utopian question, but I pose it because it's entirely conceivable that we will one day live miserably in a thoroughly ravaged world in which lesbians and gay men can marry and serve openly in the Army and that's it. Capitalism, after all, can absorb a lot. Poverty, war, alienation, environmental destruction, colonialism, unequal development, boom/bust cycles, private property, individualism, commodity fetishism, the fetishization of the body, the fetishization of violence, guns, drugs, child abuse, underfunded and bad education (itself a form of child abuse)—these things are key to the successful functioning of the free market. Homophobia is not; the system could certainly accommodate demands for equal rights for homosexuals without danger to itself.



But are officially sanctioned homosexual marriages and identifiably homosexual soldiers the ultimate aims of homosexual liberation? Clearly not, if by homosexual liberation we mean the liberation of homosexuals, who, like most everyone else, are and will continue to be oppressed by the depredations of capital until some better way of living together can be arrived at. So then are homosexual marriages and soldiery the ultimate, which is to say the only achievable, aims of the *gay rights movement*, a politics not of vision but of pragmatics?

Andrew Sullivan, in a provocative, carefully reasoned, moving, troubling article in *The New Republic* a year ago, arrived at that conclusion. Andrew's prescription is that liberals go after "pro-active" government bans on homosexual participation in the military and the institution of marriage. Period.

Such a politics of homosexuality is dispiriting. Like conservative thought in general, it offers very little in the way of hope, and very little in the way of vision. What of all the other things gay men and lesbians have to fear? What of the things gay children have to fear, in common with all children? What of the planetary despoilment that kills us? Or the financial necessity that drives some of us into unsafe, insecure, stupid, demeaning and ill-paying jobs? Or the unemployment that impoverishes some of us? Or the racism some of us face? Or the rape some of us fear? What about AIDS? Is it enough to say, Not our problem? Of course gay and lesbian politics is a progressive politics: It depends on progress for the accomplishment of any of its goals. Is there any progressive politics that recognizes no connectedness, no border-crossings, no solidarity or possibility for mutual aid?

Perhaps the far horizon of lesbian and gay politics is a socialism of the skin. Our task is to confront the political problematics of desire and repression. Stonewall was a sixties thing, part of the utopian project of that time. Honoring the true desire of the skin, and the connection between the skin and heart and mind and soul, is what homosexual liberation is about.

Gay rights may be obtainable, on however broad or limited a basis, but liberation depends on a politics that goes beyond, not an antipolitics. Our unhappiness as scared queer children doesn't only isolate us, it also politicizes us. It inculcates in us a desire for connection that is all the stronger because we have experienced its absence. Our suffering teaches us solidarity; or it should.

PHOTO: BENJAMIN WILSON / FLICKR; ILLUSTRATION: FRANCES JETTER

Looking Backward

Review of The Bell Curve,
by Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein

ADOLPH REED JR.

November 28, 1994

Charles Murray first slithered into American public life a decade ago, when he published *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980*, in which he argued that the cause of poverty among black Americans is the very effort to alleviate poverty through social provision. He proposed, appropriately for a book bearing a 1984 publication date, that the poor would be best helped by the elimination of all social support; a regime of tough love would wean them from debilitating dependency, on pain of extermination.

Murray has returned to the public stage now with publication of *The Bell Curve*, the product of a diabolical collaboration with Richard Herrnstein, the late Harvard psychologist known outside the academy for a more than twenty-year crusade to justify inequality by attributing it to innate, and therefore supposedly ineradicable, differences in intelligence.

Herrnstein and Murray contend that the key to explaining all inequality and all social problems in the United States is stratification by a unitary entity called intelligence, or "cognitive ability"—as measured in I.Q. Beneath the mind-numbing barrage of numbers, what really drives this book, and reflects the diabolism of the Murray/Herrnstein combination, is its claim to demonstrate black intellectual inferiority. They use I.Q. to support a "twofer": opposition to affirmative action, which overplaces incompetent blacks, and the contention that black poverty derives from the existence of an innately inferior black underclass.

Despite their concern to insulate themselves from the appearance of racism, Herrnstein and Murray display a perspective worthy of an Alabama filling station. *The Bell Curve* is embedded in the intellectual apparatus of the crypto-fascist right. The central authorities on whom Herrnstein and Murray rely for their claims about I.Q., race and heredity are nearly all associated with the Pioneer Fund, an ultra-rightist foundation that was formed in the 1930s to advance eugenicist agendas.

I am convinced that having to do what I've done in this review besmirches my dignity. It's a statement about the right's momentum that *The Bell Curve* makes such a splash that *The Nation* has to devote so much space to arming our troops against it. Mainstream racial discourse is dishonest and polluted enough to take the book seriously. Jason DeParle, in his *New York Times Magazine* puff piece, can't decide whether the Charles Murray who burned a cross in his youth, and who proposes a separate but equal world in which "each clan will add up its accomplishments using its own weighting system…and, most importantly, will not be concerned about comparing its accomplishments line-by-line with those of any other clan," is a racist. *New Republic* editor Andrew Sullivan opines that "the notion that there might be resilient ethnic differences in intelligence is not…an inherently racist belief."

Murray has always been the same intellectual brownshirt. He has neither changed over the past decade nor done anything else that might redeem his reputation as a scholar. And it doesn't matter whether he is a committed ideologue or an amoral opportunist. Nazis came in both varieties—think of Alfred Rosenberg and Paul de Man—and in real life the lines separating the two are seldom clear.

> *"These trade agreements are natural consequences of the great successes of the past years in reducing democracy to empty forms, so that the vile maxim of the masters can be pursued without undue interference."*
>
> –Noam Chomsky, "Notes on NAFTA," March 29, 1993

ART ARCHIVE

Public Options

Sue Coe, July 15, 1991

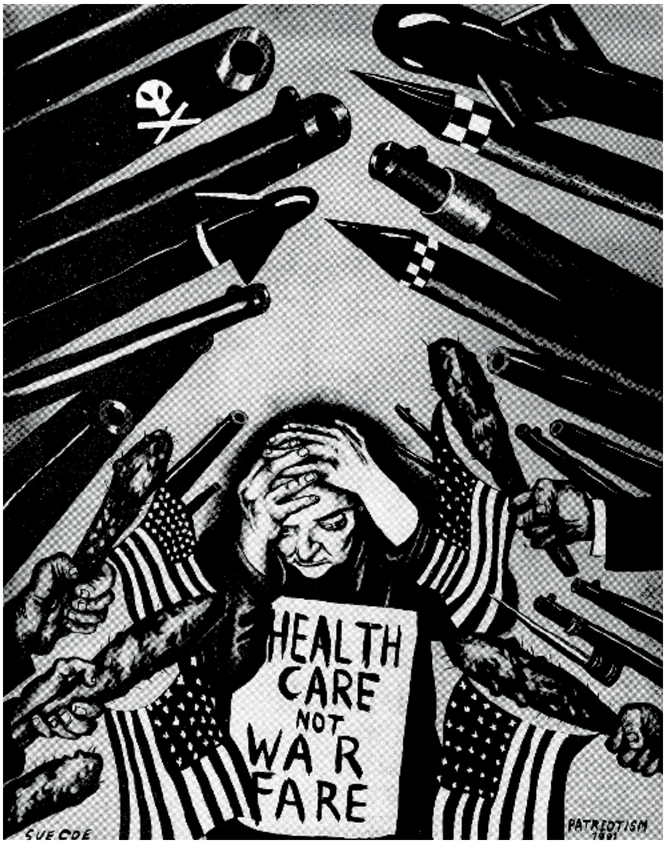
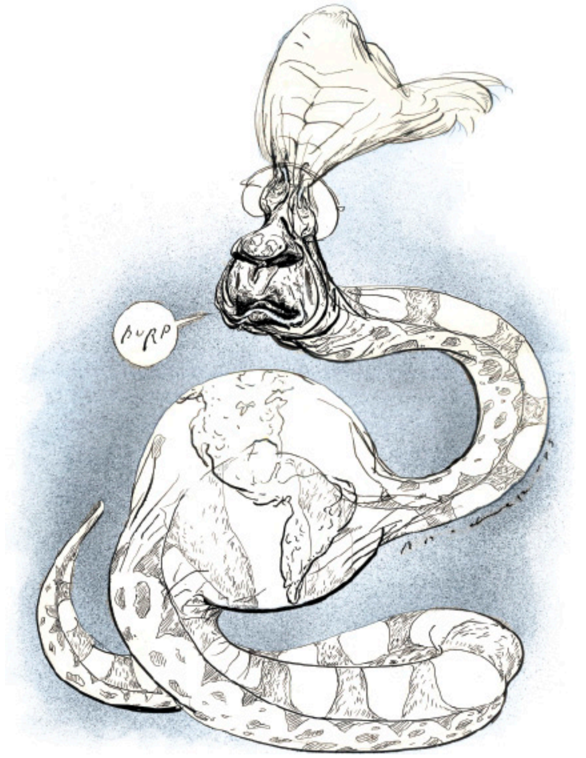


ILLUSTRATION: TOP, RICO LINS



STEVE BRODNER

Citizen Murdoch

ROBERT SHERRILL

MAY 29, 1995

Brilliant timing. While the rest of the bomb-spooked bureaucrats in Washington try to convince a restless and unhappy public that they shouldn't be objects of contempt, the Federal Communications Commission comes out with a ruling—against the N.A.A.C.P. and in favor of journalism's foremost bully-boy, Rupert Murdoch—that shows just how easy it is for folks with big-big money to break the law and get away with it.

The F.C.C. should have stripped billionaire Murdoch of his Fox TV stations. Actually, in its ruling of May 4, the commission acknowledged that he is an outlaw in the industry and, in a bit of bureaucratic bluster, gave Murdoch forty-five days to convince the commission that it shouldn't punish him. Don't be fooled by that. They'll do nothing to him. And the upshot of the F.C.C.'s action will ultimately be the approval of his plan to turn Fox into what will become the right wing's principal voice in this country.

Rupert Murdoch has built a global newspaper/TV empire by peddling sleaze and piffle; because those commodities have such an appeal to the world's boobocracy, the empire grows apace—most recently through a linkup with telecommunications giant MCI. Many in the media industry despise him. *The Wall Street Journal*, with typical understatement, once wrote that among British and U.S. liberal journalists "he has inspired a hatred and scorn that have seldom been equaled in the history of press ownership." On the other hand, many politicians and bureaucrats seem to like him very much. This is doubtless because he does nice things for them. But just how far does his generosity go? Surely he doesn't stoop to outright bribery. Perish the thought!

Nevertheless, it wasn't surprising that when Murdoch's organization was caught trying to slip Newt Gingrich $4.5 million for what would be two ghostwritten books, and given the fact that Gingrich is not exactly known as a best-selling author (his last book netted him $15,000), there were some who just automatically interpreted that as a kind of bribe.

It was a rather natural conclusion to come to, considering that Murdoch had pulled the book contract ploy before in ways that cynics might interpret crudely. Margaret Thatcher got more than $5 million from Murdoch's publishing house, HarperCollins, for her memoirs when she stepped down as Britain's Prime Minister, and many felt this was not so much a recognition of her literary skills as it was a payoff—a delayed bribe, you might say—for virtually handing over Great Britain to feed Murdoch's bottomless ambitions. Five million bucks was dirt cheap.

Murdoch and his family own 46 percent of News Corporation, the Australian company that pays for all his dirty work. It's a gusher, bringing in more than $8 billion in operating revenues a year. So why wouldn't it be wise to spend a few million bucks to buy the necessary politicians and bureaucrats to protect the empire's U.S. realm?

To Newt on Art

ARTHUR MILLER

JULY 31, 1995

Dear Mr. Gingrich:

I write to correct an impression which you seem to have concerning my having created a literary career with no help from government. In 1938, when I graduated from the University of Michigan, I managed to get into the W.P.A. Writers Project—$22.77 a week—for six months until the Project was shut down. The government's help was brief but crucial. The country then was in crisis, as you know, and the support of the arts by government was a vital gesture of mutuality between the American people and the artists, and helped sustain a faith in one another and the country's future.

You are aware, I'm sure, that we spend far less on the support of our fine arts than almost every other advanced country. To you this indeed may be a valid expression of the American way, an emphatic reliance on the self rather than others. But as a historian you must recall that over the millennia the nature and function of the arts have been regarded as decisively different from other human enterprises.

Some thirty or so years ago, I spoke at Brandeis College in support of some kind of subsidy for theater in the belief that sooner or later the bottom-line attitude would serve us badly. A man rose in the audience: "I manufacture shoes; if the public won't buy enough of them, why shouldn't I demand government support?" Hard to answer that one. I could only think to ask him a question in reply: "Can you name me one classical Greek shoemaker?"

That sounds like an elitist answer, admittedly, but a work of art does outlast the best-made pair of shoes, probably because it reflects the soul and spirit of a people rather than only its body.

We believe most in the reality of what is marketable; this is the hallmark of commercial society, and we glory in it. But there is often more enduring value in what is not marketable, or not immediately so. The real question, it seems to me, is whether the American artist is to be alienated from his government or encouraged by it to express the nature and genius of his people. The National Endowment, compared to similar efforts in other countries, is minuscule in scope; but the spirit behind it must not be extinguished. I hope in the end you will agree.

Sincerely yours,
Arthur Miller

The Nation.
FOUR MORE YEARS

[November 22, 2004]

10-14-2002
Christopher Hitchens ends his "Minority Report" column, citing "something more than a disagreement of emphasis or tactics." At the time, it was the longest-running column in *Nation* history, although Alexander Cockburn's "Beat the Devil" would soon surpass it.

11-2-2004
George W. Bush is re-elected as president. "The fight is over," a *Nation* editorial states. "Let the fight begin."

Bombs and Bulldozers

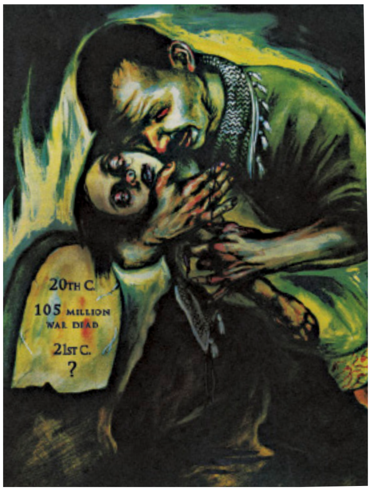
EDWARD W. SAID

SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

It has taken almost four years for the Oslo peace process to peel off its cosmetic wrappings to reveal the stark truth hidden at its core: There was no peace agreement. Instead, Palestinians entered an appalling spiral of loss and humiliation, gulled by the United States and the media into thinking that we had at last achieved some measure of respectability, bludgeoned by Israel into accepting its pathological definition of security, all of which has impoverished our people, who are obliged to watch more settlements being built, more land taken, more houses destroyed, more sadistic collective punishments meted out. Israel should explain why we should forget the past, remain uncompensated, our travails unacknowledged, even as all other victims of injustice have the right to reparations, apologies and the like. There is no logic to that, only the cold, hard, narcissistic indifference of amoral power.

Now the egregious Netanyahu and his American chorus are proposing permanent-status negotiations not to reverse the long injustice but merely to insure "security." Ever since the marketplace bombings, the media and the Israeli and U.S. governments have insisted that Palestinian violence be stopped. Even the "peacenik" Amos Oz has demanded that *we* decide between peace and violence, as if Israel had grounded its planes, dismantled its nuclear arsenal, stopped bombing and occupying South Lebanon, and withdrawn all its troops from the West Bank, along with the checkpoints it has planted between every major Palestinian center. Israel and its American supporters have rarely troubled themselves with any of those facts. Who do Israeli leaders think they are that they ignore what they have done to us and still wrap themselves in the mantle of "the survivors"? Is there no sense of respect for the victims' victims, no barrier to what Israel can do and continue to demand the privileges of the innocent?

When President Clinton and Madeleine Albright repeat the propaganda of the Israeli lobby—"there is no parallel between bombs and bulldozers"—they need to explain to a recently evicted Palestinian family or Palestinians under curfew or Palestinians whose young men and women languish in Israeli jails or who are strip-searched by Israeli soldiers, or driven out of Jerusalem so Russian Jews can be settled in their homes, or deprived of any right to resist Israeli occupation, what is the equivalent of an Israeli-American bulldozer in such a context. There is a racist premise underpinning the "peace process" that Arab lives aren't worth as much as Jewish lives.


20TH C.
105 MILLION WAR DEAD
21ST C.
?

Terror bombing is terrible, and it cannot be condoned. But the bulldozers of forgetfulness and righteous arrogance are terrible also.

The air needs to be cleared, language shorn of its worn-out phrases, honesty and fairness given a chance. Palestinians want peace, but not at any price and not the way Netanyahu defines it, with millions of conditions concealing an iron rejection of Palestinian equality. A start must be made somewhere, blame apportioned properly and responsibility assigned proportionately. One cannot expect a people without statehood, without rights, without hope, to act like diplomats sitting in seminar rooms talking about abstract scenarios and confidence-building measures. There cannot be peace and security while Palestinians continue to suffer and not one word is said about the causes of that suffering.

ART ARCHIVE

Just a Theory

Edward Sorel, November 4, 1996

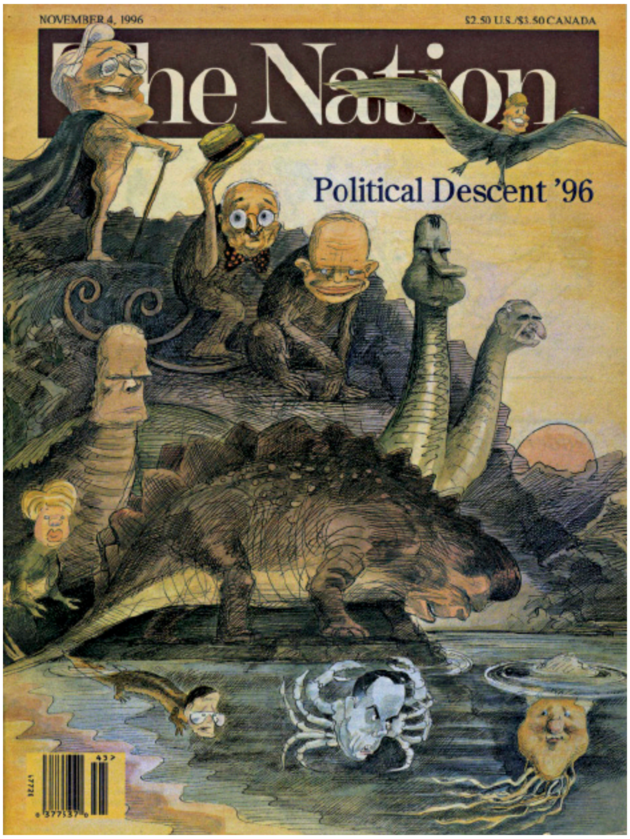


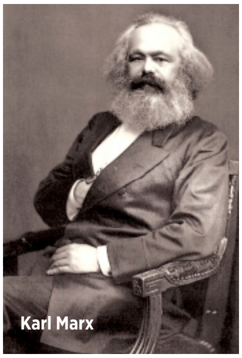
ILLUSTRATION: *DIED PURPLE*, BY SUE COE; COVER: GENE CASE AND STEPHEN KLING / AVENGING ANGELS

Unchained Melody

MARSHALL BERMAN

MAY 11, 1998

The best story I've heard about *The Communist Manifesto* came from Hans Morgenthau, the great theorist of international relations who died in 1980. It was the early seventies at CUNY, and he was reminiscing about his childhood in Bavaria before World War I. Morgenthau's father, a doctor in a working-class neighborhood of Coburg, often took his son along on house calls. Many of his patients were dying of TB; a doctor could do nothing to save their lives, but might help them die with dignity. When his father asked about last requests, many workers said they wanted to have the *Manifesto* buried with them when they died. They implored the doctor to see that the priest didn't sneak in and plant the Bible on them instead.


Karl Marx

This spring, the *Manifesto* is 150 years old. Apart from the Bible, it has become the most widely read book in the world. Whenever there's trouble, anywhere in the world, the book becomes an item; when things quiet down, the book drops out of sight; when there's trouble again, the people who forgot remember. When fascist-type regimes seize power, it's always on the list of books to burn. When people dream of resistance—even if they're not Communists—it provides music for their dreams.

Yet literate people today, even people with left politics, are ignorant of what's actually in the book. So what does [it] offer?

Marx sees the modern working class as an immense worldwide community waiting to happen. Such large possibilities give the story of organizing a permanent gravity and grandeur. The process of creating unions is not just an item in interest-group politics but a vital part of what Lessing called "the education of the human race." And it is not just educational but existential: the process of people individually and collectively discovering who they are. As they learn who they are, they will come to see that they need one another in order to be themselves. They will see, because workers are smart: Bourgeois society has forced them to be, in order to survive its constant upheavals. Marx knows they will get it by and by. Solidarity is not sacrifice of yourself but the self's fulfillment. Learning to give yourself to other workers, who may look and sound very different from you but are like you in depth, gives a man or woman a place in the world and delivers the self from dread.

The nineties began with the mass destruction of Marx effigies. It was the "postmodern" age: We weren't supposed to need big ideas. As the nineties end, we find ourselves in a dynamic global society ever more unified by downsizing, de-skilling and dread—just like the old man said. All of a sudden, the iconic looks more convincing than the ironic; that classic bearded presence, the atheist as biblical prophet, is back just in time for the millennium. At the dawn of the twentieth century, there were workers who were ready to die with *The Communist Manifesto*. At the dawn of the twenty-first, there may be even more who are ready to live with it.

A Global Green Deal

MARK HERTSGAARD

FEBRUARY 1, 1999

Environmentalism has been one of the ascendant social forces of the twentieth century, but it will not succeed in the twenty-first century if it does not deliver economic well-being as well as ecosystem salvation. To many, this seems an impossible task. But repairing our ravaged environment could become one of the biggest economic enterprises of the coming century, a huge source of jobs, profits and general economic well-being.

One model is the New Deal that President Franklin Roosevelt launched in the thirties to propel the US economy out of depression. After all, today's economic problems are strikingly similar to those of the thirties: instability, inequality, overcapacity—too much money at the top and too little at the bottom to generate enough demand to keep the system churning forward. The basic function of the New Deal was to restore demand to the economy by, among other measures, guaranteeing workers a minimum wage and putting the unemployed to work in government-funded public works projects.

Why not revive those New Deal policies but apply them in a green and global fashion? The program could be called the Global Green Deal. Will this cost money? Without question. But there is lots of money available; we're just spending it foolishly now. In the United States military spending remains at bloated, cold war levels nearly ten years after the Berlin wall fell. Amid such excess, even a minor redeployment of resources can yield large gains.

A Global Green Deal that put people to work restoring our ravaged environment would yield enormous economic and social benefits to the vast majority of the earth's inhabitants, to say nothing of their descendants. Such a fundamental shift in direction will not happen by itself, however. FDR pushed the New Deal because millions of unemployed people were in the streets, just as Richard Nixon got out of Vietnam because Americans of all stripes were opposing the war. It's time to confront our next President with similar pressure on behalf of a Global Green Deal.

> “*When our fears have all been serialized, our creativity censured, our ideas 'marketplaced,' our rights sold, our intelligence sloganized, our strength downsized, our privacy auctioned; when the theatricality, the entertainment value, the marketing of life is complete, we will find ourselves living not in a nation but in a consortium of industries, and wholly unintelligible to ourselves except for what we see as through a screen darkly.*”
>
> –Toni Morrison, "Racism and Fascism," 1995

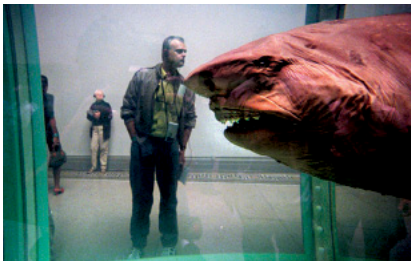
ILLUSTRATION: IGOR KOPELNITSKY; PHOTO: JOHN MAYALL

“Sensation” in Brooklyn

ARTHUR C. DANTO

NOVEMBER 1, 1999

The Brooklyn Museum of Art, as if persuaded by its own ill-advised publicity that the art in its “Sensation” show might endanger the welfare of its viewers, at first thought it prudent to turn away children under age 17 unless accompanied by an adult. It ought instead to have turned away adult viewers unless accompanied by a child, preferably one well under 17. Children are not squeamish, nor capable of indignation. They giggle at things that make adults uneasy. They do not carry a burden of art history, so they will not dismiss things on the ground that it has all been done before. They are not cynics, nor are they “taxpayers.” And they exist on the same level of feeling as do many of the artists in this extraordinarily youthful show. So borrow a child if you don’t have one—or better still, be your own child, and treat the exhibition initially as if you were making an expedition to FAO Schwarz. There is, surprisingly given the title of the show, no sex to speak of, though there are some oddly distributed penises that the child will find hilarious. Whatever may be said on the floor of the Senate, it really is art. Whatever has been said in City Hall, it is not sick. It is, on the contrary, healthy. The worst that can be said of it is that it is brash. It is the brashness of art students the world around. There is an exuberance, a confidence, a swagger unfortunately not to be found in the demoralized American art world of today (for explanation refer to the floor of the Senate and the offices of City Hall).

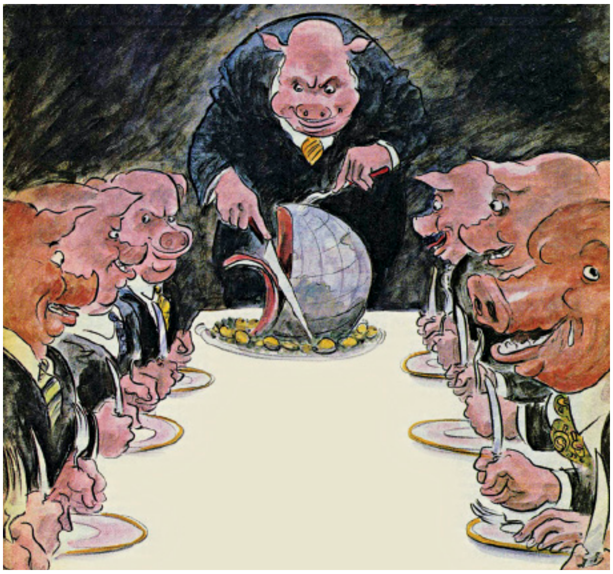


The first work you will encounter is a real shark in an immense tank. The child will gasp at the majesty and beauty of a work it would have been difficult to anticipate from photographs of it or from descriptions or representations on the Internet. The artist is Damien Hirst, effectively the *chef d’école* of the post-Thatcher London art world. Putting a huge fish in a large tank of formaldehyde sounds easy enough for even a city official to do. But *imagining* doing it requires a degree of artistic intuition of a very rare order, since one would have to anticipate what it would look like and what effect it would have on the viewer. The work in fact has the power, sobriety and majesty of a cathedral, some of which, of course, must be credited to the shark itself.

Breaking Glass-Steagall

EDITORIAL

NOVEMBER 15, 1999

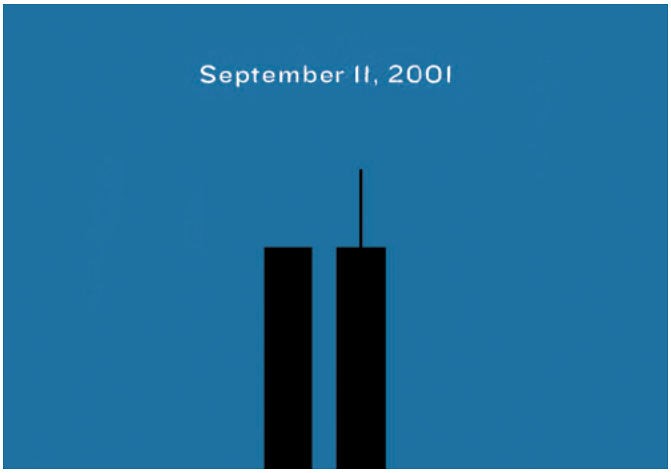


Although Wall Street has pushed for financial deregulation for two decades, it was last year’s merger of Citicorp and Travelers that set the stage for Congress’s effective revocation of the Glass-Steagall Act in late October. The merger was a violation of the longstanding laws separating banking and insurance companies, but Citicorp and Travelers, because they well knew their power to ram deregulation through Congress, exploited loopholes that gave them a temporary exemption. Indeed, further proving that Wall Street and Washington are two branches of the same firm, the newly formed Citigroup announced only days after the deal that it had hired recently departed Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin as a member of its three-person office of the chairman.

For their money, the finance industry bought not only the end of the Glass-Steagall Act but also the partial repeal of the Bank Holding Company Act. These landmark pieces of legislation, recognizing the inherent dangers of too great a concentration of financial power, barred common ownership of banks, insurance companies and securities firms and erected a wall of separation between banks and nonfinancial companies. Now the ban on common ownership has been lifted—and the wall separating banking and commerce is likely soon to be breached. The misnamed Financial Services Modernization Act will usher in another round of record-breaking mergers, as companies rush to combine into “one-stop shopping” operations, concentrating financial power in trillion-dollar global giants and paving the way for future taxpayer bailouts of too-big-to-fail financial corporations. Regulation of this new universe will be minimal, with powers scattered among a half-dozen federal agencies and fifty state insurance departments—none with sufficient clout to do the job.

There is much more that is wrong with the bill: It does not include adequate protections against redlining; it does not require banks to provide basic services to the poor, leaving them at the mercy of check-cashing shops and similar rip-off outfits; and it opens the way for the new conglomerates to gouge consumers. History will record this bill as a landmark in the march toward the consolidation of financial power in America.

PHOTO: LYNSEY ADDARIO / AP; ILLUSTRATION: EDWARD SOREL



Letter From Ground Zero

JONATHAN SCHELL

OCTOBER 15, 2001

I live six blocks from the ruins of the north tower of the World Trade Center, which is about as close as you can be to ground zero without having been silenced. My specific neighborhood was violated, mutilated. As I write these words, the acrid, dank, rancid stink—it is the smell of death—of the still-smoking site is in my nostrils. Not that these things confer any great distinction—they are merely the local embodiment of the circumstance, felt more or less keenly by everyone in the world in the aftermath of the attack, that in our age of weapons of mass destruction every square foot of our globe can become such a ground zero in a twinkling. We have long known this intellectually, but now we know it viscerally, as a nausea in the pit of the stomach that is unlikely to go away.

In an instant and without warning on a fine fall morning, the known world had been jerked aside like a mere slide in a projector, and a new world had been rammed into its place. I have before me the *New York Times* of September 11, which went to press, of course, the night before the attack. It is news from Atlantis. "Key Leaders" were talking of "Possible Deals to Revive Economy," a headline said, but who was paying attention now? Only one headline—"Nuclear Booty: More Smugglers Use Asia Route"—seemed fit for the day's events.

There are many hundreds of thousands of journalists in the world today. I think of them—us—as a kind of army, indeed, a very large one, as armies go. It is an army that terrorists almost always seek to recruit. Their deeds seek to influence public opinion, which is to say public will. The terrorist act of September 11, though costing more lives than any other, was no exception. As so many have observed, it was, probably by evil design, a disaster film—even a comic book or video game—brought sickeningly to life: horrific "infotainment" or "reality TV." The use of real life and real lives to enact a plot lifted out of the trashiest entertainments was an element of the peculiar debasement of the event.

If the hijackers' hope was to weaken the will of the United States to oppose their cause, obviously their plan backfired. American will to defeat them could scarcely be stronger. On the other hand, weakening American will to lash out may not have been their goal. Just the contrary may be the case. If I were a terrorist leader, there is nothing I would be praying for more ardently than an attack by the United States on one or more Islamic countries leading to the death of many innocent Muslims. If this happened, then, having successfully recruited the media army, I would have recruited the armed forces of the United States as well and would be well on my way to creating the war between America and Islamic civilization that at present I could only dream of.

Vaclav Havel once invoked the "power of the powerless," by which he meant the power of the nonviolent weak to defy and defeat totalitarian regimes through unarmed acts of noncooperation and defiance. But the powerful have some power, too. Terrorism is jujitsu, by which the violent weak use the power of the powerful to overthrow them. Nineteen men with plastic knives and box cutters used some of the United States' biggest and most sophisticated aircraft to knock down some of its biggest buildings, all in the apparent hope of enlisting the world's media army to provoke America's real army to commit acts that would rally opinion in the terrorists' part of the world to their own side. But the powerful can refuse to cooperate. Tom Friedman of the *Times* advised that the United States, like the Taliban, should act "a *little bit* crazy." But the Taliban are a poor model. That way lies our undoing. It is not in the power of America's enemies to defeat us. Only we can do that. We should refrain.

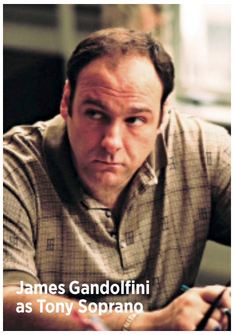
Our Mobsters, Ourselves

ELLEN WILLIS

APRIL 2, 2001

Midway through the first season of *The Sopranos*, the protagonist's psychotherapist, Jennifer Melfi, has a not-exactly-traditional family dinner with her middle-class Italian parents, son and ex-husband Richard. She lets slip (hmm!) that one of her patients is a mobster, much to Richard's consternation. An activist in Italian anti-defamation politics, he is incensed at the opprobrium the Mafia has brought on all Italians. What is the point, he protests, of trying to help such a person? In a subsequent scene he contemptuously dismisses Jennifer and her profession for purveying "cheesy moral relativism" in the face of evil. His challenge boldly proclaims what until then has been implicit: The richest and most compelling piece of television—no, of popular culture—that I've encountered in the past twenty years is a meditation on the nature of morality, the possibility of redemption and the legacy of Freud.

Self-consciousness is a conspicuous feature of Tony Soprano's world even aside from therapy; in fact, it's clear that self-consciousness has provoked the anxiety attack that sends him to Jennifer Melfi. It's not just a matter of stressful circumstances. Tony's identity is fractured, part outlaw rooted in a dying tribal culture, part suburbanite enmeshed in another kind of culture altogether. Despite his efforts at concealment, his criminal life is all too evident to his children (after all, they too have seen *The Godfather*), a source of pain and confusion on both sides.


James Gandolfini as Tony Soprano

Richard Melfi's charge of moral relativism is highly ironic, for Jennifer finds that her task is precisely to confront the tribal relativism and cognitive dissonance that keep Tony Soprano from making sense of his

ILLUSTRATION: OPEN; PHOTO: ANTHONY NESTA / AP

life. He sees his business as the Sicilians' opportunity to get in on the American Dream, the violence that attends it as enforcement of rules known to all who choose to play the game: Gangsters are soldiers, whose killing, far from being immoral, is impelled by positive virtues—loyalty, respect, friendship, willingness to put one's own life on the line. It does not strike Tony as inconsistent to expect his kids to behave or to send them to Catholic school, any more than he considers that nights with his Russian girlfriend belie his reverence for the institution of the family.

Jennifer's trip is also a rocky one. In her person, the values of Freud and the Enlightenment are filtered through the cultural radical legacy of the 1960s: She is a woman challenging a man whose relationship to both legitimate and outlaw patriarchal hierarchies is in crisis. It's a shaky and vulnerable role, the danger of physical violence an undercurrent from the beginning, but there are also bonds that make the relationship possible.

It's grandiose, perhaps, to see in one television series, however popular, a cultural trend; and after all *The Sopranos* is on HBO, not CBS or NBC. But ultimately the show is so gripping because, in the words of Elaine Showalter, it's a "cultural Rorschach test." It has been called a parable of corruption and hypocrisy in the postmodern middle class, and it is that; a critique of sexuality, the family and male-female relations in the wake of feminism, and it's that too. But at the primal level, the inkblot is the unconscious. The murderous mobster is the predatory lust and aggression in all of us; his lies and cover-ups are ours; the therapist's fear is our own collective terror of peeling away those lies. The problem is that we can't live with the lies, either. So facing down the terror, a little at a time, becomes the only route to sanity, if not salvation.

Is Texas America?

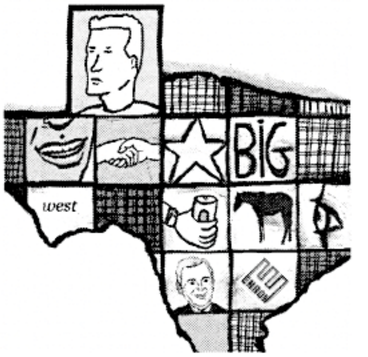
MOLLY IVINS

November 17, 2003

Well, sheesh. I don't know whether to warn you that because George Dubya Bush is President the whole damn country is about to be turned into Texas (a singularly horrible fate) or if I should try to stand up for us and convince the rest of the country we're not all that insane.

Truth is, I've spent much of my life trying, unsuccessfully, to explode the myths about Texas. One attempts to explain—with all good will, historical evidence, nasty statistics and just a bow of recognition to our racism—that Texas is not *The Alamo* starring John Wayne. We're not *Giant*, we ain't a John Ford western. The first real Texan I ever saw on TV was *King of the Hill*'s Boomhauer, the guy who's always drinking beer and you can't understand a word he says.

So, how come trying to explode myths about Texas always winds up reinforcing them? After all these years, I do not think it is my fault. The fact is, it's a damned peculiar place. Given all the horseshit, there's bound to be a pony in here somewhere. Just by trying to be honest about it, one accidentally underlines its sheer strangeness.



If you want to understand George W. Bush—unlike his daddy, an unfortunate example of a truly Texas-identified citizen—you have to stretch your imagination around a weird Texas amalgam: religion, anti-intellectualism and machismo. All big, deep strains here, but still an odd combination. Then add that Bush is just another li'l upper-class white boy out trying to prove he's tough.

Among the various strains of Texas right-wingism (it is factually incorrect to call it conservatism) is some leftover loony John Birchism, now morphed into militias; country-club economic conservatism, à la George Bush *père*; and the usual batty anti-government strain. Of course Texas grew on the tender mercies of the federal government—rural electrification, dams, generations of master pork-barrel politicians and vast subsidies to the oil and gas industry. But that has never interfered with Texans' touching but entirely erroneous belief that this is the Frontier, and that in the Old West every man pulled his own weight and depended on no one else. The myth of rugged individualism continues to afflict a generation raised entirely in suburbs with names like "Flowering Forest Hills of Lubbock."

It is widely believed in Texas that the highest purpose of government is to create "a healthy bidness climate." The legislature is so dominated by special interests that the gallery where the lobbyists sit is called "the owners' box." The consequences of unregulated capitalism, of special interests being able to buy government through campaign contributions, are more evident here because Texas is "first and worst" in this area. That Enron was a Texas company is no accident: Texas was also Ground Zero in the savings-and-loan scandals, is continually the site of major rip-offs by the insurance industry and has a rich history of gigantic chicanery going way back.

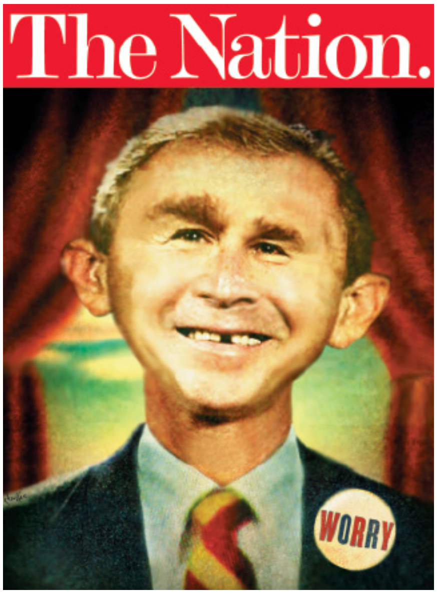
As Willie Nelson sings, if we couldn't laugh, we would all go insane. This is our redeeming social value and perhaps our one gift to progressives outside our borders. We do laugh. We have no choice. We have to have fun while trying to stave off the forces of darkness because we hardly ever win, so it's the only fun we get to have.

ILLUSTRATION: KAREN CALDICOTT

ART ARCHIVE

Shrubwatch

Brian Stauffer, November 13, 2000



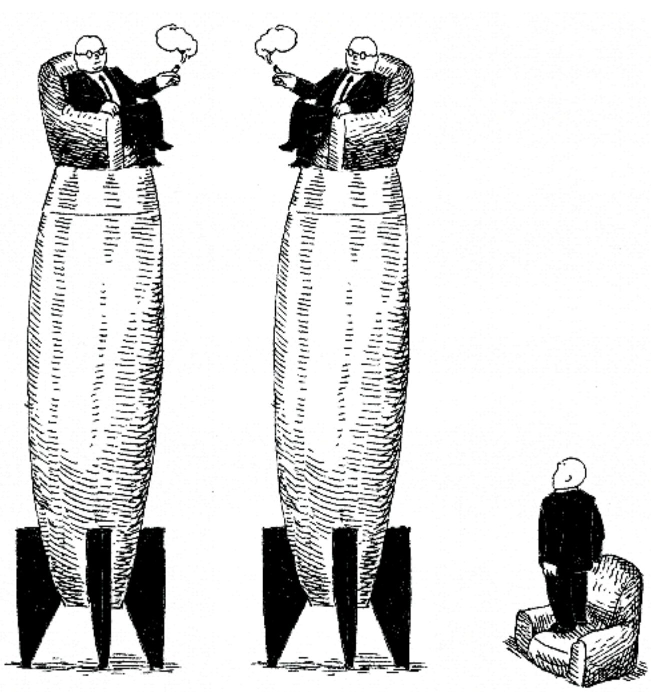


ILLUSTRATION: WESLEY BEDROSIAN

The Case Against the War

JONATHAN SCHELL

MARCH 3, 2003

War in Iraq has not yet begun, but its most important lesson is already plain: The time is long gone—if it ever existed—when any major element of the danger of weapons of mass destruction, including above all nuclear danger, can be addressed realistically without taking into account the whole dilemma. When we look at the story of proliferation, whether from the point of view of the haves or the have-nots, what emerges is that for practical purposes any distinction that once might have existed (and even then only in appearance, not in reality) between possessors and proliferators has now been erased. A rose is a rose is a rose, anthrax is anthrax is anthrax, a thermonuclear weapon is a thermonuclear weapon is a thermonuclear weapon. The world's prospective nuclear arsenals cannot be dealt with without attending to its existing ones. As long as some countries insist on having any of these, others will try to get them. Until this axiom is understood, neither "dialogue" nor war can succeed.

The days of the double standard are over. We cannot preserve it and should not want to. The struggle to maintain it by force, anachronistically represented by Bush's proposed war on Iraq, in which the United States threatens pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons to stop another country merely from getting them, can only worsen the global problem it seeks to solve. Nations that already possess nuclear weapons must recognize that nuclear danger begins with them. The shield of invisibility must be pierced. The web of terror that binds every nuclear arsenal to every other—and also to every arsenal of chemical or biological weapons—must be acknowledged.

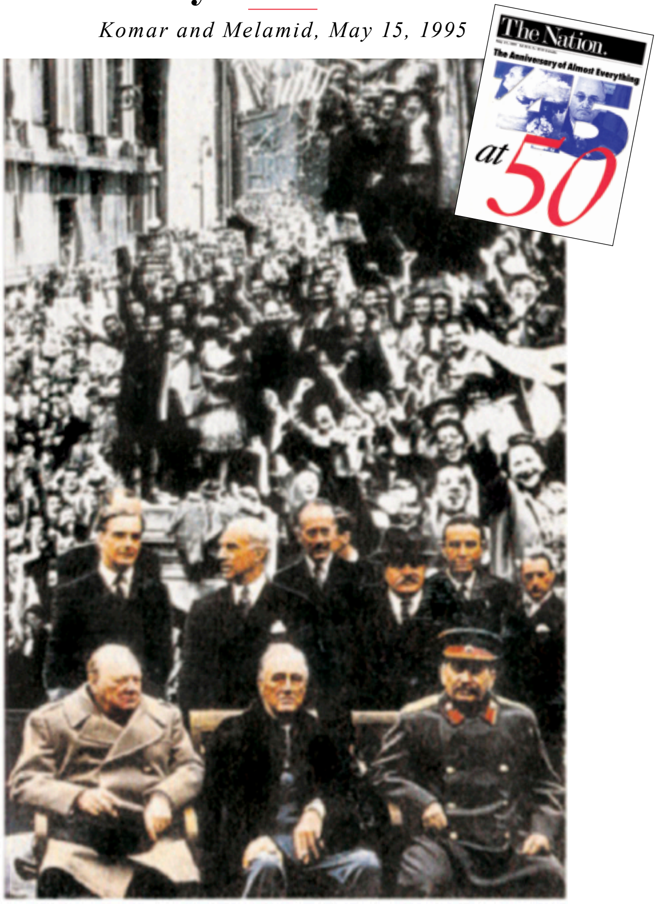
A revival of worldwide disarmament negotiations must be the means, the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction the end. That idea has long been in eclipse, and today it lies outside the mainstream of political opinion. Unfortunately, historical reality is no respecter of conventional wisdom and often requires it to change course if calamity is to be avoided. But fortunately it is one element of the genius of democracy—and of US democracy in particular—that encrusted orthodoxy can be challenged and overthrown by popular pressure. The movement *against* the war in Iraq should also become a movement *for* something, and that something should be a return to the long-neglected path to abolition of all weapons of mass destruction. Only by offering a solution to the problem that the war claims to solve but does not can this war and others be stopped.

Let us try to imagine it: one human species on its one earth exercising one will to defeat forever a threat to its one collective existence. Could any nation stand against it? Without this commitment, the international community—if I may express it thus—is like a nuclear reactor from which the fuel rods have been withdrawn. Making the commitment would be to insert the rods, to start up the chain reaction. The chain reaction would be the democratic activity of peoples demanding action from governments to secure their survival. True democracy is indispensable to disarmament, and vice versa. This is the power—not the power of cruise missiles and B-52s—that can release humanity from its peril. The price demanded of us for freedom from the danger of weapons of mass destruction is to relinquish our own.

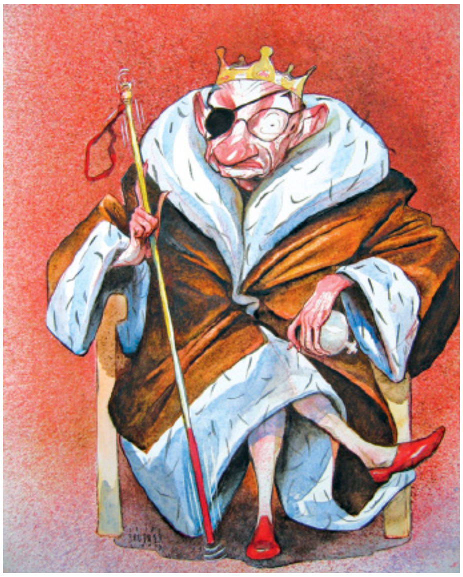
ART ARCHIVE

Fifty Years Later

Komar and Melamid, May 15, 1995


The Nation.
The Anniversary of Almost Everything
at 50

> *The parallel between terrorism and torture is instructive. Proponents of each practice maintain that the ends justify the means. They explain away violence by framing it as a necessary 'last resort.' And they obscure the human impact of that violence by refusing to register the humanity of their victims.*
>
> –Eyal Press, "In Torture We Trust?", March 31, 2003



Rolling Back the 20th Century

WILLIAM GREIDER

May 12, 2003

George Bush II may be as shallow as he appears, but his presidency represents a far more formidable challenge than either Reagan or Gingrich. His governing strength is anchored in the long, hard-driving movement of the right that now owns all three branches of the federal government.

The movement's grand ambition is to roll back the twentieth century. That is, defenestrate the federal government and reduce its scale and powers to a level well below what it was before the New Deal's centralization. With that accomplished, movement conservatives envision a restored society in which the prevailing values and power relationships resemble the America that existed around 1900, when William McKinley was President.

The movement has a substantial base that believes in its ideological vision—people alarmed by cultural change or injured in some way by government intrusions, coupled with economic interests that have very strong reasons to get government off their backs—and the right has created the political mechanics that allow these disparate elements to pull together. Cosmopolitan corporate executives hold their noses and go along with Christian activists trying to stamp out "decadent" liberal culture. Fed-up working-class conservatives support business's assaults on their common enemy, liberal government, even though they may be personally injured when business objectives triumph.

The right's power also feeds off the general decay in the political system—the widely shared and often justifiable resentments felt toward big government, which no longer seems to address the common concerns of ordinary citizens.

All in all, the right's agenda promises a reordering that will drive the country toward greater separation and segmentation—higher walls and more distance for those who wish to protect themselves from messy diversity. The trend of social disintegration, including the slow breakup of the broad middle class, has been under way for several decades—fissures generated by growing inequalities of status and well-being. The right proposes to legitimize and encourage these deep social changes in the name of greater autonomy. Dismantle the common assets of society, give people back their tax money and let everyone fend for himself.

Is this the country Americans want for their grandchildren or great-grandchildren? Autonomy can be lonely and chilly, as millions of Americans have learned in recent years when the company canceled their pensions or the stock market swallowed their savings or industrial interests destroyed their surroundings. For most Americans, there is no redress without common action, collective efforts based on mutual trust and shared responsibilities. In other words, I do not believe that most Americans want what the right wants. But I also think many cannot see the choices clearly or grasp the long-term implications for the country.

The first place to inquire is not the failures of government but the malformed power relationships of American capitalism—the terms of employment that reduce many workers to powerless digits, the closely held decisions of finance capital that shape our society, the waste and destruction embedded in our system of mass consumption and production. My own conviction is that a lot of Americans are ready to take up these questions and many others. Some are actually old questions—issues of power that were not resolved in the great reform eras of the past. They await a new generation bold enough to ask if our prosperous society is really as free and satisfied as it claims to be. When conscientious people find ideas and remedies that resonate with the real experiences of Americans, then they will have their vision, and perhaps the true answer to the right wing.

ART ARCHIVE

GroupThink

Barbara Kruger, January 22, 1996

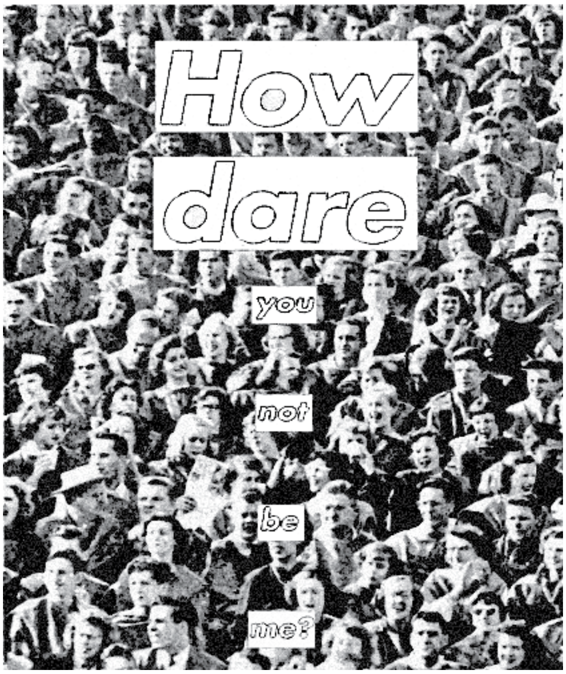


ILLUSTRATION: TOP, STEVE BRODNER

Congratulations to
Katrina vanden Heuvel
and the entire Nation *family*
for **150 years** *of outstanding*
reporting and analysis
on the most important issues
of times past and present.

Best wishes for the many years to come!

Antonia Stolper
Bob Fertik
Ted Fertik

THE Nation. 150
INSTIGATING PROGRESS SINCE 1865

The Rise of Disaster Capitalism

NAOMI KLEIN

May 2, 2005

Last summer, in the lull of the August media doze, the Bush Administration's doctrine of preventive war took a major leap forward. On August 5, 2004, the White House created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, headed by former US Ambassador to Ukraine Carlos Pascual. Its mandate is to draw up elaborate “post-conflict” plans for up to twenty-five countries that are not, as of yet, in conflict. Fittingly, a government devoted to perpetual pre-emptive deconstruction now has a standing office of perpetual pre-emptive reconstruction.

It certainly seems that ever-larger portions of the globe are under active reconstruction: being rebuilt by a parallel government made up of a familiar cast of for-profit consulting firms, engineering companies, mega-NGOs, government and UN aid agencies and international financial institutions. And from the people living in these reconstruction sites—Iraq to Aceh, Afghanistan to Haiti—a similar chorus of complaints can be heard. The work is far too slow, if it is happening at all. Foreign consultants live high on cost-plus expense accounts and thousand-dollar-a-day salaries, while locals are shut out of much-needed jobs, training and decision-making. Expert “democracy builders” lecture governments on the importance of transparency and “good governance,” yet most contractors and NGOs refuse to open their books to those same governments, let alone give them control over how their aid money is spent.

But if anything, stories of corruption and incompetence serve to mask this deeper scandal: the rise of a predatory form of disaster capitalism that uses the desperation and fear created by catastrophe to engage in radical social and economic engineering. On this front, the reconstruction industry works so quickly and efficiently that the privatizations and land grabs are usually locked in before the local population knows what hit them.

But shattered countries are attractive to the World Bank for another reason: They take orders well. After a cataclysmic event, governments will usually do whatever it takes to get aid dollars—even if it means racking up huge debts and agreeing to sweeping policy reforms. And with the local population struggling to find shelter and food, political organizing against privatization can seem like an unimaginable luxury.

In January Condoleezza Rice sparked a small controversy by describing the tsunami as “a wonderful opportunity” that “has paid great dividends for us.” Many were horrified at the idea of treating a massive human tragedy as a chance to seek advantage. But, if anything, Rice was understating the case. A group calling itself Thailand Tsunami Survivors and Supporters says that for “businessmen-politicians, the tsunami was the answer to their prayers, since it literally wiped these coastal areas clean of the communities which had previously stood in the way of their plans for resorts, hotels, casinos and shrimp farms. To them, all these coastal areas are now open land!”

Disaster, it seems, is the new *terra nullius*.

HOUSE
TATTOO

After the Indian Ocean tsunami, *The Nation* called for a transition “from a politics of military security to one of human security.”

Blood Is Thicker Than Blackwater

JEREMY SCAHILL

May 8, 2006

It is one of the most infamous incidents of the war in Iraq: On March 31, 2004, four private American security contractors get lost and end up driving through the center of Falluja, a hotbed of Sunni resistance to the US occupation. Shortly after entering the city, they get stuck in traffic, and their small convoy is ambushed. Several armed men approach the two vehicles and open fire from behind, repeatedly shooting the men at point-blank range. Within moments, their bodies are dragged from the vehicles and a crowd descends on them, tearing them to pieces. Eventually, their corpses are chopped and burned. The remains of two of the men are strung up on a bridge over the Euphrates River and left to dangle. The gruesome image is soon beamed across the globe. Within days of the ambush, US forces laid siege to Falluja, beginning what would be one of the most brutal and sustained US operations of the occupation.

For most people, the gruesome killings were the first they had ever heard of Blackwater USA, a small, North Carolina–based private security company. Since the Falluja incident, and because of it, Blackwater has emerged as one of the most successful and profitable security contractors operating in Iraq. The company and its secretive, mega-millionaire, right-wing Christian founder, Erik Prince, position

2005-2015

[1 of 7]

President Obama's Inauguration

[February 2, 2009]

11-28-2005
In large print on the cover, *The Nation* pledges not to “support any candidate for national office who does not make a speedy end to the American war in Iraq a major issue of his or her campaign.”

1-5-2009
***The Nation* publishes A.C. Thompson's investigation** of racist crimes committed by white vigilantes and the New Orleans police in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In 2012, Thompson's reporting is featured on the HBO show *Treme*.

PHOTO: STEPHEN TRUPP / AP; COVER: ILLUSTRATION, JOHN MAVROUDIS; DESIGN, GENE CASE AND STEPHEN KLING / AVENGING ANGELS

Blackwater as a patriotic extension of the US military, and its employees are required to take an oath of loyalty to the Constitution.

But today, Blackwater is facing a potentially devastating battle—this time not in Iraq but in court. The company is being sued for the wrongful deaths of Stephen "Scott" Helvenston, Mike Teague, Jerko Zovko and Wesley Batalona by the families of the men slain in Falluja.

"Blackwater sent my son and the other three into Falluja knowing that there was a very good possibility this could happen," says Katy Helvenston, the mother of 38-year-old Scott Helvenston, whose charred body was hung from the Falluja bridge. "Iraqis physically did it, and it doesn't get any more horrible than what they did to my son, does it? But I hold Blackwater responsible one thousand percent."

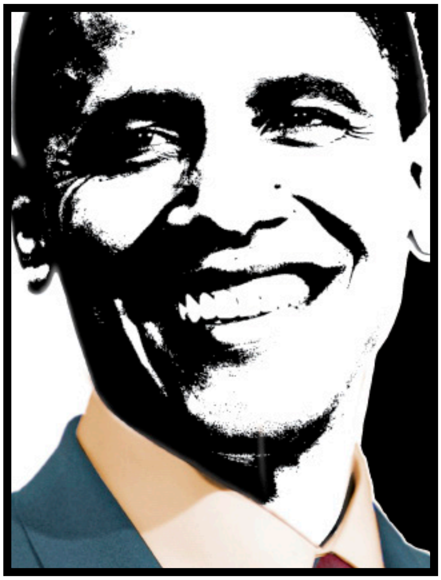
In one of its few statements on the suit, Blackwater spokesperson Chris Bertelli said, "Blackwater hopes that the honor and dignity of our fallen comrades are not diminished by the use of the legal process." Katy Helvenston calls that "total BS in my opinion," and says that the families decided to sue only after being stonewalled, misled and lied to by the company. "Blackwater seems to understand money. That's the only thing they understand," she says. "They have no values, they have no morals. They're whores. They're the whores of war."

Blackwater has friends in high places. It's a well-connected, Republican-controlled business that has made its fortune because of the Bush Administration. Company founder Erik Prince and his family have poured serious money into Republican causes and campaign coffers over the past twenty years. While it is not unheard of for a successful business to cast its lot entirely with one party, it has clearly paid off.

The White House, for its part, has turned the issue of accountability of Blackwater and other private security companies into a joke, literally. This April at a forum at Johns Hopkins, Bush was asked by a student about bringing "private military contractors under a system of law," to which Bush replied, laughing, that he was going to ask Defense Secretary Rumsfeld: "I was going to—I pick up the phone and say, Mr. Secretary, I've got an interesting question [*laughter*]. This is what delegation—I don't mean to be dodging the question, although it's kind of convenient in this case, but never—[*laughter*]. I really will—I'm going to call the Secretary and say you brought up a very valid question, and what are we doing about it? That's how I work."

L'Étranger

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS



I mean, you got the first sort of mainstream African-American who's articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy. I mean, that's a storybook, man. —*Senator Joseph Biden*

MARCH 5, 2007

Frankly, what I found most unforgivable about Senator Biden's recent remarks was his utter failure to learn from a past in which he was intimately implicated. He was, after all, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee when our spectacularly inarticulate President's father nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. As every last minority graduate of Yale—whew, ten or fifteen at least—came forward to weigh in about whether Thomas or Anita Hill was more believable, media forces expressed shock and awe that there were—gasp—just so many black people who could string a whole sentence together! Astonishing sequences of subject-verb-object! A few years later, it was Colin Powell who was perceived as shockingly articulate; then Condoleezza Rice.

The persistence of this narrative is not limited to Biden. On MSNBC's *Chris Matthews Show*, Matthews hosted a discussion of Obama's decision to run for President. "No history of Jim Crow, no history of anger, no history of slavery," Matthews opined. "All the bad stuff in our history ain't there with this guy." Not true, I thought. The "bad stuff in our history" rests heavily upon each and every one of us. It shapes us all, whether me, Matthews, Obama, Biden—or Amadou Diallo, the decent, hard-working Guinean immigrant without any American racial "history," who died in a hail of bullets fired by New York City police officers because he looked like what the officers, groaning with racial "baggage," imagined to be a criminal.

American identity is defined by the experience of the willing diaspora, the break by choice that is the heart of the immigrant myth. It is that narrative of chosen migration that has exiled most African-Americans from a substantial part of the American narrative—and it is precisely his place in that narrative that makes Obama so attractive, so intriguing and yet so strange.

Obama's family history is an assemblage of elements of the American dream. His late father migrated from Kenya to the United States; his mother was from Kansas. Before him, the archetypal narrative of immigrant odyssey had been an almost exclusively white and European one. I suspect that Obama's aura stems not just from a Tiger Woods–ishly fashionable taste for "biracialism" but from the fact that he's managed to fuse the immigrant myth of meteoric upward mobility onto the figure of a black man.

ILLUSTRATIONS: RIGHT, GENE CASE AND STEPHEN KLING / AVENGING ANGELS; ABOVE, SARAH O'CONNOR

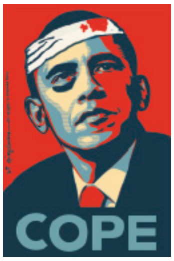
Senator Obama has many attractive attributes—he's smart, a great writer and speaker, a skilled tactician, full of fresh vision, youthful, with a good-looking Kennedy-esque appeal. Yet there are many people to whom his appeal rests not on what he is but on what they imagine he isn't. He's not a whiner; he's not angry. He doesn't hate white people. He doesn't wear his hair like Al Sharpton. He is not the whole list of negatives that people like Chris Matthews or Joe Biden or a whole generation of fucked-up middle-class college students identify as "blackness." Indeed, part of the reason I am anxious about the trustworthiness of Obama's widespread appeal is this unacknowledged value placed on his ability to perform "unexpected" aspects of both whiteness and blackness.

Flipped endlessly down a hall of mirrored images of blackness and whiteness, he is no less celebrated than Frederick Douglass was as one whose entire identity is mired in the exhausted exceptionalism of the "surprisingly" hyperarticulate African phenotype; yet simultaneously embraced as one who has transcended the embodiment of a troublesome past and emerged on the other side—bright as a newly minted coin, "cleansed" of baggage, of roots, of the unacknowledged rupture that is, paradoxically, our greatest national bond.

> "Of course, it is possible to overstate the significance of this moment for the condition of black Americans, but not its sweetness—and the pure, unadulterated joy that has come from tasting it."
>
> –Editorial, "Ready, Set, Obama," November 24, 2008

ART ARCHIVE

Art Spiegelman, December 3, 2012



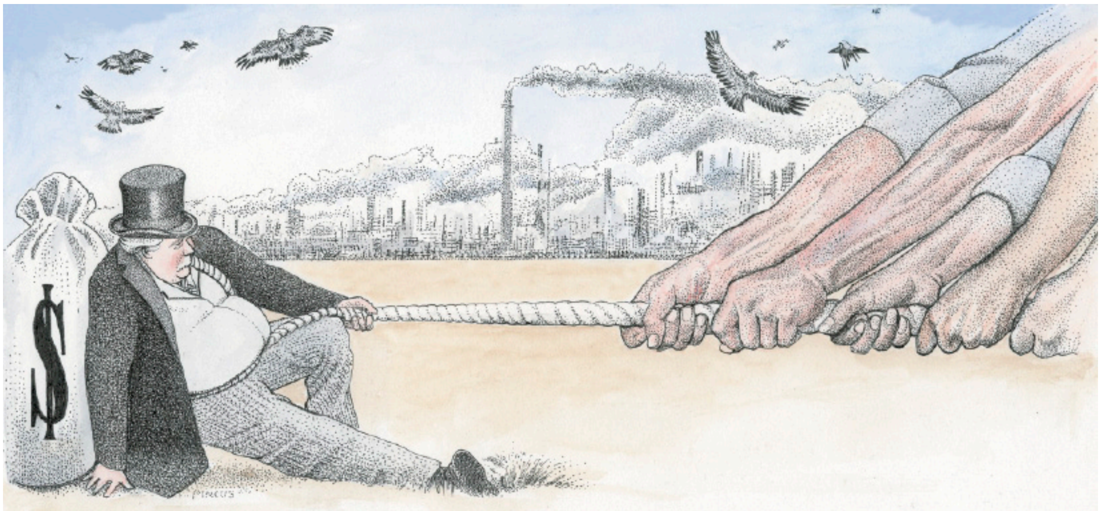


ILLUSTRATION: HARRY PINCUS

Bailout Nation

EDITORIAL

OCTOBER 13, 2008

It is rare that this magazine has occasion to cite approvingly the words of a reactionary Republican like Jim Bunning of Kentucky. But when faced with the audacious attempt by the Bush administration to bail out its Wall Street allies with $700 billion of the citizens' money, Senator Bunning was succinct and correct: "The free market for all intents and purposes is dead in America." To which we would only add: this realization couldn't come soon enough.

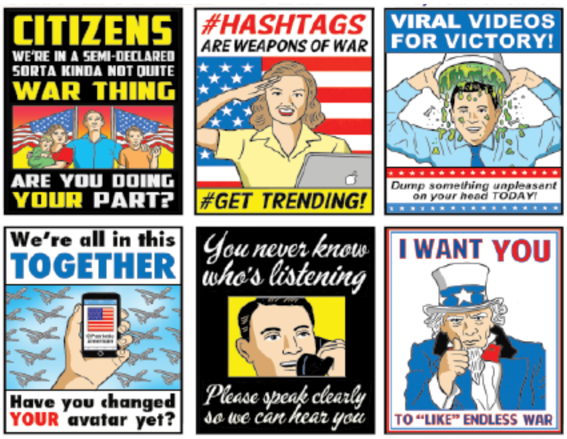
The administration's proposal to buy up Wall Street's garbage didn't so much kill the free market as make clear that it is largely a convenient fiction. While conservatives have invoked market fundamentalist dogma in defense of their class war against working Americans, the fact is they've turned to the state for bailouts, contracts and special favors at nearly every turn. At least now the mechanics of the heist have been laid bare. With ardent free marketeers like former Goldman Sachs CEO Henry Paulson publicly throwing in the towel, we preserve hope that this crisis will finally retire the neoliberal era.

The unlikely and unpredictable cross-ideological alliances that have formed in response to the bailout show that the central philosophical debate is shifting: it is no longer about the size of government, for there will be more government in the years to come. The question is, What kind of government intervention will we have, and, most important, Whom will it benefit? Will the final contours of this bailout bring us "Goldman Sachs socialism," as William Greider calls it, or more democratic financial governance? As journalists, writers and thinkers, we welcome this new debate. As political actors and citizens, we embrace this new battle.

ART ARCHIVE

This Modern World

Tom Tomorrow, October 27, 2014


CITIZENS
WE'RE IN A SEMI-DECLARED SORTA KINDA NOT QUITE
WAR THING
ARE YOU DOING YOUR PART?
#HASHTAGS
ARE WEAPONS OF WAR
#GET TRENDING!
VIRAL VIDEOS FOR VICTORY!
Dump something unpleasant on your head TODAY!
We're all in this TOGETHER
Have you changed YOUR avatar yet?
You never know who's listening
Please speak clearly so we can hear you
I WANT YOU
TO "LIKE" ENDLESS WAR

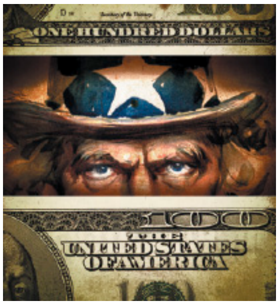
Deficits of Mass Destruction

CHRISTOPHER HAYES

August 2, 2010

Right now we face a joblessness crisis that threatens to pitch us into a long, ugly period of low growth, the kind of lost decade that will cause tremendous misery, degrade the nation's human capital, undermine an entire cohort of young workers for years and blow a hole in the government's bank sheet. The best chance we have to stave off this scenario is more government spending to nurse the economy back to health. The economy may be alive, but that doesn't mean it's healthy. There's a reason you keep taking antibiotics even after you start to feel better.

And yet: the drumbeat of deficit hysterics thumping in self-righteous panic grows louder by the day. This all seems eerily familiar. The conversation—if it can be called that—about deficits recalls the national conversation about war in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. From one day to the next, what was once accepted by the establishment as tolerable—Saddam Hussein—became intolerable, a crisis of such pressing urgency that "serious people" were required to present their ideas about how to deal with it. Once the burden of proof shifted from those who favored war to those who opposed it, the argument was lost.



We are poised on the same tipping point with regard to the debt. Amid official unemployment of 9.5 percent and a global contraction, we shouldn't even be talking about deficits in the short run. Yet these days, entrance into the club of the "serious" requires not a plan for reducing unemployment but a plan to do battle with the invisible and as yet unmaterialized international bond traders preparing an attack on the dollar.

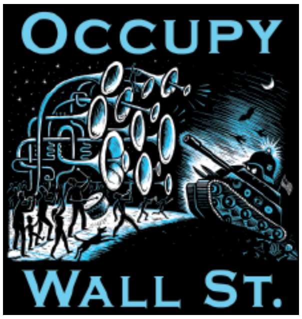
Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the selling of the Iraq War was its false pretext. It never really was about weapons of mass destruction, as Paul Wolfowitz admitted. WMDs were just "what everyone could agree on." So it is with deficits. Conservatives and their neoliberal allies don't really care about deficits; they care about austerity—about gutting the welfare state and redistributing wealth upward. That's the objective. Deficits are just what they can all agree on, the WMDs of this manufactured crisis.

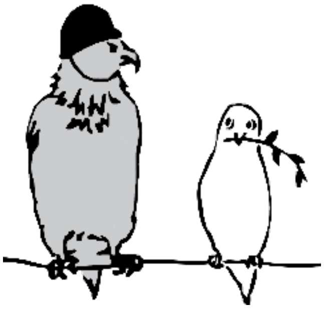
The Audacity of Occupy Wall Street

RICHARD KIM

November 21, 2011

Since September 17, the first day of the Occupation, thousands of people have flocked to Liberty [Plaza] to follow this impulse to live life anew. To stay for even a few days there is to be caught up in an incredible delirium of talking, making, doing and more talking—a beehive in which the drones have overthrown the queen but are still buzzing about furiously without any immediately apparent purpose. Someone might shout over the human microphone, "Mic check! (Mic check!) We need! (We need!) Some volunteers! (Some volunteers!) To go to Home Depot! (To go to Home Depot!) And get cleaning supplies! (And get cleaning supplies!)" A handful of people might perk up and answer the call—or not, in which case it is made again and again. Sometimes too many show up and are sent away; sometimes an Occupier jumps to attention but gets distracted by something or someone shiny in Liberty's evolving alleyways, and instead of shopping for the revolution is next seen discussing the politics of micro-finance. Somehow, some way—brooms and mops, bleach and scrub brushes show up. They mysteriously vanish, and an ad hoc committee is organized to replenish them and then to guard them. To this day, Liberty is kept relatively clean, which keeps the cops out; the mums in the planters still bloom, hardy by stock but made hardier by the Occupation's life-sustaining and downwardly distributed ethic of care.

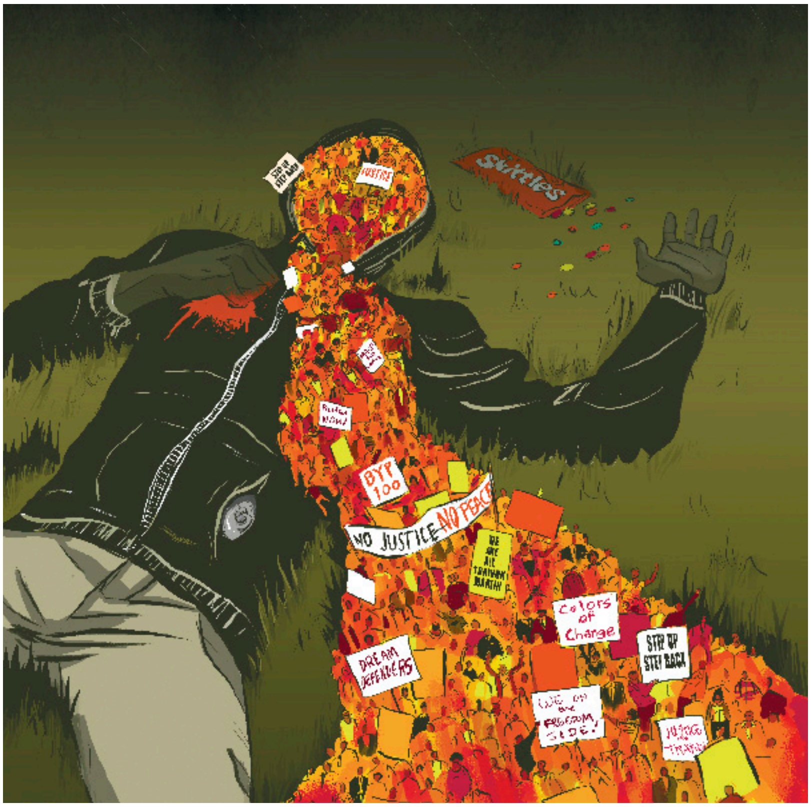




Inching back, climbing down, from total war, remembering ways to limit or curtail bellicose exchange and above all dispensing with the idea of an extraordinary war to end all wars: These are urgent lessons for our time. ”

—Ruth Scurr, "Savage Wars of Peace" February 5, 2007

ILLUSTRATIONS: TOP, TIM ROBINSON; MIDDLE, ERIC DROOKER; BOTTOM, CAITLIN DOVER



RYAN INZANA

What It's Like to Be a Problem

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY

APRIL 16, 2012

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois described the experience of being black in America as a constant awareness that others viewed him as a problem. "Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question…. How does it feel to be a problem?" This is not a statement about black people having more problems than their white counterparts. Du Bois captures the defining element of African-American life as the very self, but most especially the visible, black self in public space as *being* a problem.

Despite the dramatic changes brought about by the ending of Jim Crow, it is once again socially, politically and legally acceptable to presume the guilt of nonwhite bodies. This is the political setting for the moment when George Zimmerman approached Trayvon Martin as he walked home in the rain with a bag of Skittles. During an interview with CNN's Anderson Cooper, Zimmerman's neighbor Frank Taaffe suggested "if he [Trayvon] had just answered him in an appropriate manner, 'I'm just here visiting. My mother's house is around the corner,' and be upfront and truthful, there wouldn't be any problem." Fox News host Geraldo Rivera weighed in on the case by saying, "I'll bet you money, if he didn't have that hoodie on, that nutty neighborhood watch guy wouldn't have responded in that violent and aggressive way." Conservative commentators and websites piled on, pointing to Trayvon's gold teeth and his tattoos. These statements suggest that the unarmed teenager was culpable in the encounter that led to his death, not because of any aggressive or illegal act but because he was not following the appropriate protocol for being black in public. A black body in public space must presume its own guilt and be prepared to present a rigidly controlled public performance of docility and respectability.

Sagging-pants laws in Louisiana, Georgia, Florida and Arkansas attempt to legislate that public performance of black bodies by making it illegal to enact particular versions of youth fashion associated with blackness. Philadelphia, New Orleans, Cleveland, Chicago and other cities have responded to violence in predominantly black communities by imposing curfews on young people and then policing these rules most vehemently among black youth—making it a crime for them to be in public space. New York City's "stop and frisk" law empowers police to temporarily detain a person based merely on "reasonable suspicion" of involvement in criminal activity, which in practice has been vastly disproportionately applied to young men of color.

It is easy, but wrong, to write off Zimmerman as a deranged man whose violence against Trayvon Martin was tragic but unpreventable. Zimmerman was acting in ways entirely consistent with the long history and contemporary reality that assumes the criminality and potential danger of black bodies.

> *"It's too early to say where this ferment will go. But there is more hope and fire from below than there has been in years. The lines are being drawn, and Americans across the country are gearing up to fight for their futures."*
>
> –Editorial, "Madisonian Democracy," March 21, 2011

Why Cold War Again?

STEPHEN F. COHEN

April 21, 2014

The East-West confrontation over Ukraine, which led to Moscow's annexation of Crimea but long predated it, is potentially the worst international crisis in more than fifty years—and the most fateful. A negotiated resolution is possible, but time may be running out.

A new Cold War divide is already descending in Europe—not in Berlin but on Russia's borders. Worse may follow. If NATO forces move toward Poland's border with Ukraine, as is being called for in Washington and Europe, Moscow is likely to send its forces into eastern Ukraine. The result would be a danger of war comparable to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Even if the outcome is the nonmilitary "isolation of Russia," today's Western mantra, the consequences will be dire. Moscow will not bow but will turn, politically and economically, to the East, as it has done before, above all to fuller alliance with China. The United States will risk losing an essential partner in vital areas of its own national security, from Iran, Syria and Afghanistan to threats of a new arms race, nuclear proliferation and more terrorism. And—no small matter—prospects for a resumption of Russia's democratization will be terminated for at least a generation.

DOUG CHAYKA

Why did this happen, nearly twenty-three years after the end of Soviet Communism, when both Washington and Moscow proclaimed a new era of "friendship and strategic partnership"? The answer given by the Obama administration, and overwhelmingly by the US political-media establishment, is that President Vladimir Putin is solely to blame. The claim is that his "autocratic" rule at home and "neo-Soviet imperialist" policies abroad eviscerated the partnership established in the 1990s by Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin. This fundamental premise underpins the American mainstream narrative of two decades of US-Russian relations, and now the Ukrainian crisis.

This crisis has unfolded in the name of "democracy" for the many countries involved, but the underlying geopolitical agenda has been clear.

But there is an alternative explanation, one more in accord with the facts. Beginning with the Clinton administration, and supported by every subsequent Republican and Democratic president and Congress, the US-led West has unrelentingly moved its military, political and economic power ever closer to post-Soviet Russia. Spearheaded by NATO's eastward expansion, already encamped in the former Soviet Baltic republics on Russia's border—now augmented by missile defense installations in neighboring states—this bipartisan, winner-take-all approach has come in various forms.

They include US-funded "democracy promotion" NGOs more deeply involved in Russia's internal politics than foreign ones are permitted to be in our country; the 1999 bombing of Moscow's Slav ally Serbia, forcibly detaching its historic province of Kosovo; a US military outpost in former Soviet Georgia (along with Ukraine, one of Putin's previously declared "red lines"), contributing to a brief proxy war in 2008; and, throughout, one-sided negotiations, called "selective cooperation," which took concessions from the Kremlin without meaningful White House reciprocity and followed by broken American promises.

All of this has unfolded, sincerely for some proponents, in the name of "democracy" and "sovereign choice" for the many countries involved, but the underlying geopolitical agenda has been clear. During the first East-West conflict over Ukraine, occasioned by its 2004 "Orange Revolution," an influential GOP columnist, Charles Krauthammer, acknowledged, "This is about Russia first, democracy only second.... The West wants to finish the job begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall and continue Europe's march to the east.... The great prize is Ukraine." The late Richard Holbrooke, an aspiring Democratic secretary of state, concurred, hoping even then for Ukraine's "final break with Moscow" and to "accelerate" Kiev's membership in NATO.

That Russia's political elite has long held this same menacing view of US intentions makes it no less true—or any less consequential. Formally announcing the annexation of Crimea on March 18, Putin vented Moscow's longstanding resentments. Several of his assertions were untrue and alarming, but others were reasonable, or at least understandable, not "delusional." Referring to Western (primarily American) policy-makers since the 1990s, he complained bitterly that they were "trying to drive us into some kind of corner," "have lied to us many times" and in Ukraine "have crossed the line," warning: "Everything has its limits."

We are left, then, with profoundly conflicting Russian-Western narratives and a political discourse of the uncomprehending, itself often the prelude to war. Demonized for years, Putin receives almost no serious consideration in Washington. His annexation speech, for example, was dismissed as a "package of fictions" by former secretary of state Madeleine Albright. Nothing in Washington's replies diminishes Putin's reasonable belief that the EU trade agreement rejected by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in November, and Yanukovych's overthrow in February by violent street protests, leading to the current "illegitimate" government, were intended to sever Ukraine's centuries-long ties with Russia and bind it to NATO. (Today's crisis was triggered by the EU's reckless ultimatum, despite Putin's offer of a "tripartite" agreement, which compelled an elected president of a deeply divided country to choose economically between the West and Russia, an approach since criticized by former German chancellors Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder. The EU's proffered "partnership" also included little-noticed "security" provisions requiring Ukraine's "convergence" with NATO policies, without mentioning the military alliance.)

Meanwhile, on both sides, belligerent rhetoric escalates, military forces are being mobilized and provocations mount in Ukraine's political civil war, with toughs in black masks, armed militias, "spontaneous" secessionist demonstrations and extremist statements by some of Kiev's would-be leaders. Anything is now possible—actual civil war, Ukraine's partition and worse. Tit-for-tat "sanctions" only exacerbate the situation.

There is a diplomatic way out. Putin did not begin or want this crisis; among other costs, it obliterated the achievement of his Sochi Olympics. Nor did he initiate the unfolding Cold War, inspired in Washington years before he came to power. Western policy-makers should therefore take seriously the adage, "There are two sides to every story." Is Putin right, as he also said on March 18, that Russia "has its own national interests that must be taken into account and respected," particularly along its borders? If the answer is no, as it has seemed to be since the 1990s—if Putin is correct in angrily protesting, "Only they can ever be right"—then war is possible, if not now, eventually.

UPDATE

As readers of my Nation *commentaries since the early 1990s know, the history of US relations with post-Soviet Russia is littered with lost opportunities—most of them squandered in Washington. When I wrote the above article (somewhat abridged here), the new, or renewed, Cold War I had foreseen was rapidly unfolding; I did little more than summarize my analysis during the preceding twenty years—having used* The Nation *as "a journalistic alert-system," as Gore Vidal once characterized the magazine—and applied it to the Ukrainian crisis.*

A month later, I wrote with Katrina vanden Heuvel [May 19, 2014]: "This Cold War—its epicenter on Russia's borders; undertaken amid inflammatory American, Russian and Ukrainian media misinformation; and unfolding without the stabilizing practices that prevented disasters during the preceding Cold War—may be even more perilous." Among the perils we cited was "an actual war with Russia triggered by Ukraine's looming civil war."

Now, in early 2015, events continue to move in that direction. The Ukrainian civil war has already killed thousands of citizens and turned more than a million others into refugees, while becoming a proxy war between the United States/NATO and Russia. Essential social and economic infrastructures in eastern Ukraine, the center of the Russian-backed rebellion, have been badly damaged by US-backed Kiev's heavy weapons, perhaps irreparably. Cooperative relations between Washington and Moscow, initiated and nurtured over decades, have been shredded, with each side blaming the other. Both are aggressively redeploying their conventional forces and "modernizing" their nuclear weapons. Warfare political factions in the capitals most involved—Washington, Kiev, Brussels and possibly Moscow—are ascendant. "The danger of war comparable to the Cuban missile crisis," to which I alluded in the article above, seems far less remote.

Meanwhile, the several possibilities for "a negotiated resolution" that I noted there soon became still more squandered opportunities. In February 2015, another chance to avert a larger war—perhaps the last—was brokered in Minsk by the leaders of Germany, France, Russia and the nominal head of Ukraine. As I write, the Minsk agreement is being assailed by its political enemies, primarily in Washington and Kiev, and its fate remains unknown.

> *"You're not patriotic because you back whoever's in power today. You're patriotic when you work to improve the lives of the people of your country, your community and your family."*
>
> –Edward Snowden, in an interview with *The Nation*, November 17, 2014

Against Easy Stories

LAILA LALAMI

FEBRUARY 2, 2015

Two armed men in balaclavas attacked *Charlie Hebdo*'s office in Paris and opened fire on the editorial staff, in the end killing five cartoonists, a columnist, a copy editor, a maintenance worker, an economist, a visitor and two police officers.

To make sense of the senseless, we tell ourselves stories. In this case, the story is that the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* is the latest salvo in an ongoing clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. The story is that the satirical magazine was the last bastion of free thought in an otherwise cowed press—a press that has given in to political correctness and is now too afraid to criticize Islam. The story is that Muslim leaders remain silent about this atrocity. The story is that France has failed to integrate its Muslim citizens, the descendants of immigrants from its former colonies. The story is that France has sent troops to fight in Muslim countries. The story is that there are double standards.

None of these stories will do, at least not for me. I find myself reading them in different guises in the national press, hoping they will satisfy or enlighten me, but something is always missing.

I am tired. Tired that the drawing of a cartoon about Muhammad attracts more anger than the spilling of blood. Tired that casual bigotry is equated with serious criticism. Tired that providing context is seen as providing an excuse. I'm also afraid for the rights of writers and artists. Afraid of the restrictive legislation that is sure to follow. And afraid for all the innocents who will suffer.

All I know is this: we are in this together. We must accept that we cannot go through life without being offended. We must accept that the right to say offensive things is a fundamental part of free speech. But we must also accept that we have a responsibility for one another. We must speak out against racism, sexism and bigotry in all its forms. Let us use reason, but let us use our hearts too.

BURHAN OZBILICI / AP

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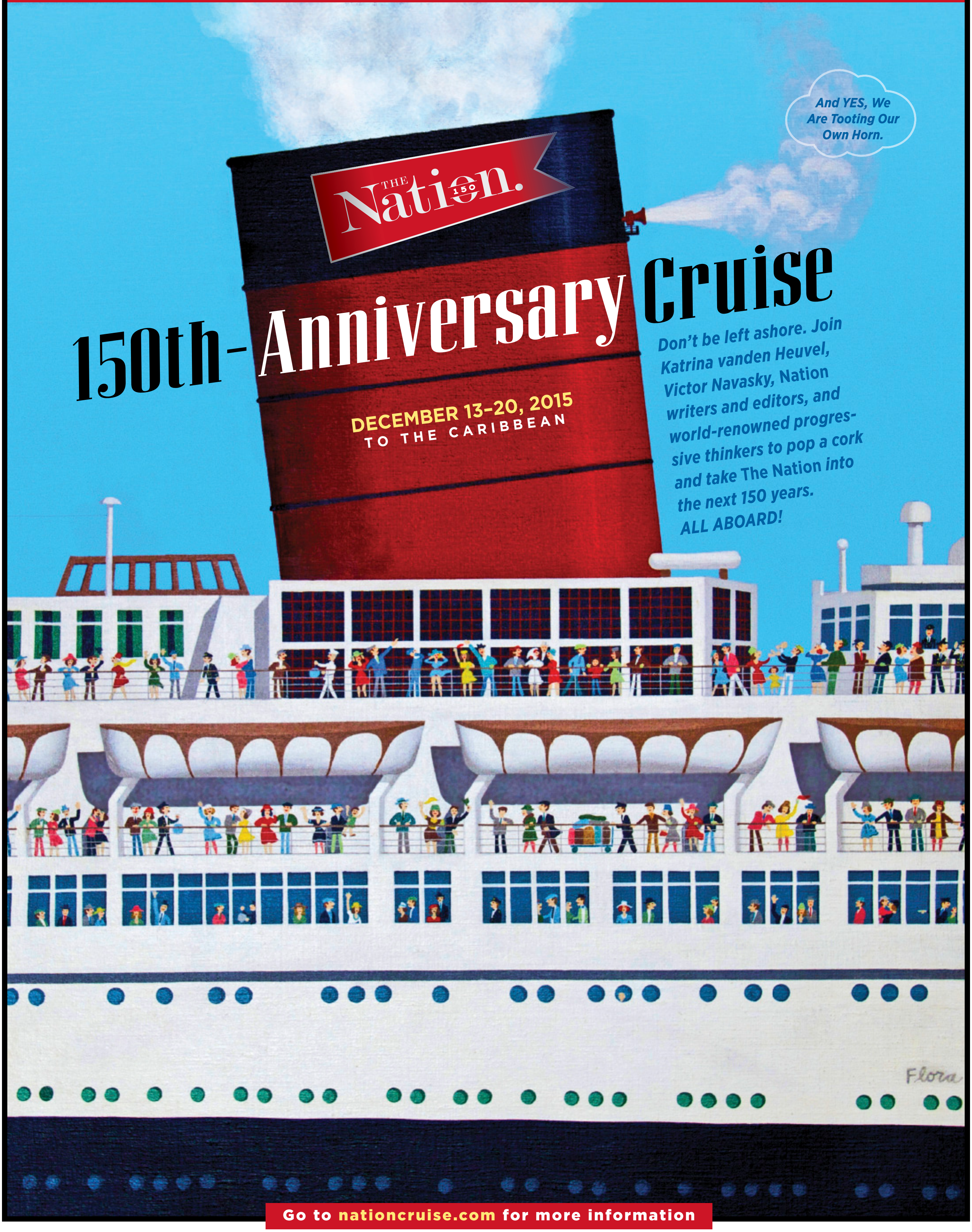

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THE NATION / 150 YEARS

RADICAL FUTURES

Harbingers of change, peeks over the horizon, maps of Utopia—and other strategies for keeping hope alive

No Place for Self-Pity, No Room for Fear

In times of dread, artists must never choose to remain silent.

TONI MORRISON

Christmas, the day after, in 2004, following the presidential re-election of George W. Bush.

I am staring out of the window in an extremely dark mood, feeling helpless. Then a friend, a fellow artist, calls to wish me happy holidays. He asks, "How are you?" And instead of "Oh, fine—and you?," I blurt out the truth: "Not well. Not only am I depressed, I can't seem to work, to write; it's as though I am paralyzed, unable to write anything more in the novel I've begun. I've never felt this way before, but the election…" I am about to explain with further detail when he interrupts, shouting: "No! No, no, no! This is precisely the time when artists go to work—not when everything is fine, but in times of dread. That's our job!"

I felt foolish the rest of the morning, especially when I recalled the artists who had done their work in gulags, prison cells, hospital beds; who did their work while hounded, exiled, reviled, pilloried. And those who were executed.

The list—which covers centuries, not just the last one—is long. A short sample will include Paul Robeson, Primo Levi, Ai Weiwei, Oscar Wilde, Pablo Picasso, Dashiell Hammett, Wole Soyinka, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Lillian Hellman, Salman Rushdie, Herta Müller, Walter Benjamin. An exhaustive list would run into the hundreds.

Dictators and tyrants routinely begin their reigns and sustain their power with the deliberate and calculated destruction of art: the censorship and book-burning of unpoliced prose, the harassment and detention of painters, journalists, poets, playwrights, novelists, essayists. This is the first step of a despot whose instinctive acts of malevolence are not simply mindless or evil; they are also perceptive. Such despots know very well that their strategy of repression will allow the real tools of oppressive power to flourish. Their plan is simple:

Dictators and tyrants routinely begin their reigns with the deliberate and calculated destruction of art.

§ Select a useful enemy—an "Other"—to convert rage into conflict, even war.

§ Limit or erase the imagination that art provides, as well as the critical thinking of scholars and journalists.

§ Distract with toys, dreams of loot, and themes of superior religion or defiant national pride that enshrine past hurts and humiliations.

The Nation could never have existed or flourished in 1940s Spain, or 2014 Syria, or apartheid South Africa, or 1930s Germany. And the reason is clear. It was born in the United States in 1865, the year of Lincoln's assassination, when political division was stark and lethal—during, as my friend said, times of dread. But no prince or king or dictator could interfere successfully or forever in a country that seriously prized freedom of the press. This is not to say there weren't elements that tried censure, but they could not, over the long haul, win. *The Nation*, with its history of disruptive, probing, intelligent essays sharing wide space equally with art criticism, reviews, poetry and drama, is as crucial now as it has been for 150 years.

In this contemporary world of violent protests, internecine war, cries for food and peace, in which whole desert cities are thrown up to shelter the dispossessed, abandoned, terrified populations running for their lives and the breath of their children, what are we (the so-called civilized) to do?

The solutions gravitate toward military intervention and/or internment—killing or jailing. Any gesture other than those two in this debased political climate is understood to be a sign of weakness. One wonders why the label "weak" has become the ultimate and unforgivable sin. Is it because we have become a nation so frightened of others, itself and its citizens that it does not recognize true weakness: the cowardice in the insistence on guns everywhere, war anywhere? How adult, how manly is it to shoot abortion doctors, schoolchildren, pedestrians, fleeing black teenagers? How strong, how powerful is the feeling of having a murderous weapon in the pocket, on the hip, in the glove compartment of your car? How leaderly is it to threaten war in foreign affairs simply out of habit, manufactured fear or national ego? And how pitiful? Pitiful because we must know, at some level of consciousness, that the source of and reason for our instilled aggression is not only fear. It is also money: the profit motive of the weapons industry, the financial support of the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned us about.

Forcing a nation to use force is easy when the citizenry is rife with discontent, experiencing feelings of a powerlessness that can be easily soothed by violence. And when the political discourse is shredded by an unreason and hatred so deep that vulgar abuse seems normal, disaffection rules. Our debates, for the most part, are examples unworthy of a playground: name-calling, verbal slaps, gossip, giggles, all while the swings and slides of governance remain empty.

For most of the last five centuries, Africa has been understood to be poor, desperately poor, in spite of the fact that it is outrageously rich in oil, gold, diamonds, precious metals, etc. But since those riches do not, in large part, belong to the people who have lived there all their lives, it has remained in the mind of the West worthy of disdain, sorrow and, of course, pillage. We sometimes forget that colonialism was and is war, a war to control and own another country's resources—

meaning money. We may also delude ourselves into thinking that our efforts to "civilize" or "pacify" other countries are not about money. Slavery was always about money: free labor producing money for owners and industries. The contemporary "working poor" and "jobless poor" are like the dormant riches of "darkest colonial Africa"—available for wage theft and property theft, and owned by metastasizing corporations stifling dissident voices.

None of this bodes well for the future. Still, I remember the shout of my friend that day after Christmas: No! This is *precisely* the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.

I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge—even wisdom. Like art. **150th**

It has become possible to see not only that we live in the Age of Fossil Fuel, but that this age is coming to an end.

Unpredictable Weather

Forecasting the future is perilous, but we have to believe in change—or at least be willing to gamble.

REBECCA SOLNIT

MOST FORECASTS OF THE FUTURE PRESUME THAT SOMETHING in the present will continue to grow and increase its power or influence. It's as simple as doing a math problem on compounding interest or multiplication tables.

Orwell did this intentionally in *1984*, creating the vision of a postwar Stalinist Britain circa 1948 that was taken to its absurd and appalling conclusion. Less imaginative people, however, genuinely believe that history moves in a straight line. Alarm about the "population bomb" arose from the assumption that women would continue to have babies at the rate they were worldwide in the 1960s. But thanks to reproductive rights and other factors, birthrates have plummeted so dramatically that some nations, from Germany to Japan, are now worried about a steep population decline.

Likewise, people unhappy about the Bush administration seemed to imagine that its power would only increase until it became some petro-cowboy version of the Thousand-Year Reich. People happy with the administration's policies also failed to anticipate how brief its ride atop the wheel of fortune would be. The Obama victory in 2008 was as out of sight in 2003 as same-sex marriage was in 1977, when Florida-orange-juice spokesmodel and bigot Anita Bryant was successfully fulminating against homosexuality.

There are monumental changes under way that seem as if they will only continue: the decline of homophobia, the widening of rights and privileges from white Christian men to the rest of us, nonwhite and nonmale. But there are backlashes against these things as well, and the other way to call it unpredictable is to say that we can't foresee which tendency will hold sway a century or more hence. Mostly, what we can learn by looking backward is that who and what we are now—sexually, socially, technologically, ecologically—was not only unpredictable but unimaginable a century or even a half-century ago. So is who and what we will be in another 100 years.

History is rarely linear. The cast of characters is never announced in advance, and the story lines are full of left turns, plot twists, about-faces, surprising crossroads and unintended consequences. In a recent article for Politico, Elana Schor notes: "As Keystone's problems imprint themselves on the nation's political DNA, environmentalists and local advocacy groups are using the same template that has stalled it for six years to stoke resistance to fossil-fuel projects from coast to coast. Word is out in the oil and gas industry that NIMBY is the new normal." As I write, almost no one knows how President Obama will ultimately handle the Keystone XL pipeline, but we do know that the struggle to stop its construction has had many ancillary effects. For example, the climate activists fighting Keystone have made the Alberta tar sands, numerous pipeline projects, the oil-by-rail system, and the larger problem of carbon emissions and climate change far more visible.

The struggle against Keystone has also catalyzed remarkable coalitions—for example, the Cowboy and Indian Alliance of rural peoples from the Great Plains, who gathered in the nation's capital last April, horses, chaps, war bonnets, alternative-energy policies and all. Under the linear theory of history, we'll decide if this was a successful movement based on the veto (or approval) of the pipeline, but as Schor points out, the effects are not linear; they ripple outward, like a rock thrown into a pond. Or they snowball. Or they catalyze some new action.

The same is true of the younger divestment movement as it spreads even farther around the world. Hundreds of investment portfolios, from college endowments and pension funds to church holdings, have been divested of their fossil-fuel stocks—but that's far from the only thing the divestment movement has done. Like the resistance to Keystone, the movement has called attention to the broader issue of climate; generated activism and networks, particularly around universities; and shed considerable light on the financial risk of investing in what is now called "the carbon bubble." With this, it has become possible to see not only that we live in the Age of Fossil Fuel, but that this age is coming to an end.

Activism always has these side effects. What the Freedom Summer accomplished cannot be measured only by what it did or didn't do in Mississippi in 1964; it changed the lives of its many young participants, who went on to do remarkable things over the ensuing half-century in innumerable fields. Hurricane Sandy, I was told recently, turned many New York City employees into people passionately concerned about climate change.

Among our few certainties about the future are the following: climate change is here, it will get worse, and it is essentially irreversible. What's uncertain is whether, through extraordinary effort, we will meet the crisis as we should, with a speedy exit from the Age of Fossil Fuel, or whether that age will drag on and foreclose the possibility of our choosing the least rather than the most terrible future. We are now essentially hostages to the small group of people who benefit most from the fossil-fuel industries, as well as the politicians in their pay—although remarkable victories have been won against them in recent years, from Ecuador to Nigeria to New York State.

The next few years will be crucial in steering us toward the least devastating of the futures that await us. It's hard to see how we will get there, but it's important to try anyway—and part of that work involves knowing that we don't know what will happen, what kind of a world we will inhabit in 2020, let alone in 2115.

IT IS THE LEAST PRIVILEGED WHO WILL PAY, AND currently are paying the most, for climate change, from the price of food as crop yields go down and crop-destroying catastrophic weather events go up, to the loss of their livelihoods, homes and lives. The impacts range from the storm-wracked tropics, to those parts of Africa being turned into deserts, to the island nations being engulfed by the sea. The least privileged, in the United States and elsewhere, have also borne the brunt of fossil fuels' toxicity, from extraction sites and refineries to the dumped by-products. As a result, while organizations old and new are addressing climate change in the United States, they are far from alone. Idle No More, the indigenous insurgency launched in Canada in late 2012, has always had climate change and the extractive industries in its focus, while from Bolivia to Vietnam, climate activism is under way.

People imagine that the world doesn't change (having forgotten how dramatically it has changed even in the last few decades), or that all its changes will be linear. Or they imagine that the only source of change is the most powerful institutions and individuals, forgetting how much change has been wrought of late by marginalized groups (queer rights), oppressed populations (the Arab Spring), relatively small activist movements (the climate movement) or surprise players (the hotel maid who brought down the head of the International Monetary Fund in 2011, for example). You have to believe in change; maybe you have to hope. Or at least be willing to gamble.

We have, along with the capacity for effort, a compass called hope: a past that can guide us along the unpredictable route, along with that commitment called love.

You have to be willing to gamble on a world not dominated by fossil fuels and the power that fossil-fuel fortunes give to a handful of people and corporations. You have to be willing to imagine a world in which we recognize that what we're called upon to do is not necessarily to sacrifice; instead, it's often to abandon what impoverishes and trivializes our lives: the frenzy to produce and consume in a landscape of insecurity about our individual and collective futures. It also means appreciating the value of many other things—confidence in the future, a greatly reduced fear of contamination or poisoning, economic justice, local engagement, decentralization, democracy—in which we've been poor during the Age of Fossil Fuel. These are the things we stand to gain if we conquer the fossil-fuel industry and reinvent energy in our time.

A lack of historical knowledge or even the memory of change in their own lifetime leaves many people unequipped to recognize the force of change. But it is a force nonetheless. That there would be a march about climate change (a boring, wonky, remote-seeming issue for most Americans not so long ago), with 400,000 participants here and sister marches around the world just last year; that the Keystone XL pipeline would be stalled for years (just like Yucca Mountain); that engineers would make solar and wind energy evolve into cheap, effective power-generating technologies so rapidly, and that local administrations would deploy them so widely—none of this was foreseeable.

You don't act because you know what's going to happen; you act because you don't. Not knowing is an important part of knowledge. If knowledge is a continent to be mapped, the unknown is the oceans surrounding it. No one is going to be invited to join the punditocracy as an expert on our ignorance or a celebrant of the unknowable. People will continue to make ridiculous predictions and go unpunished for these errors; unforeseeable change will continue to explode our best assumptions. As Howard Zinn wrote in 1988 (a different world, in which almost no one foresaw the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc): "Who could have predicted, not just the Russian Revolution, but Stalin's deformation of it, then Khrushchev's astounding exposure of Stalin, and recently Gorbachev's succession of surprises?" His essay was titled "The Optimism of Uncertainty."

When Zinn wrote it, South America was still largely a continent of dictatorships and death squads, not the most democratic and progressive quadrant of the earth, with its many grassroots organizations devoted to self-determination, its resistance to corporate globalization and other forms of exploitation, its indigenous resurgences, its progressive female leaders in three of the most powerful countries. Things change: Germany, the worst country in the world seventy-five years ago, is now a shining example of how to address climate change, the biggest problem that humankind has ever faced.

The world of 2115 is unimaginable, and so is the road

POETRY ARCHIVE

MARCH 24, 1926

Home Song

Claude McKay

Oh breezes blowing on the red hill-top
By tall fox-tails,
Where through dry twigs and leaves and grasses hop
The dull-brown quails!

Is there no magic floating in the air
To bring to me
A breath of you, when I am homesick here
Across the sea?

Oh black boys holding on the cricket ground
A penny race!
What other black boy frisking round and round,
Plays in my place?

When picnic days come with their yearly thrills
In warm December,
The boy in me romps with you in the hills—
Remember!

Paris, 1925

ERIC DROOKER

there. That world may be better than we can now imagine, and in some ways—ecological ones—it may be worse. It may have corrected oppressions we do not yet recognize. But if we are clear about our lack of knowledge, we can move forward, acting on what we believe. The theologian Walter Brueggemann writes, "Memory produces hope in the same way that amnesia produces despair." Memory itself is a subjective thing. We can tell of a past that was nothing but defeats and cruelties and injustices; or we can tell of a lovely golden age now irretrievably lost; or we can tell a more complicated and accurate story—one that has room for the best and the worst, for atrocities and liberations. A memory commensurate to the complexity of the past produces hope.

Our world is both better (more inclusive, less discriminatory) and worse (think corporate consolidation, ecological devastation, the surveillance state) than the world of fifty years ago. The ways in which it is better happened because people made demands and then acted to realize them. It was not inevitable that Native Americans, women, gays, lesbians, and transgender people would gain rights and respect. The better part of our present happened because of enormous efforts, sometimes over decades or, as with the vote for women, nearly a century of effort and social transformation.

We don't have a map for any of this, which is what all the confident prophecies of a predictable, linear future pretend to offer us. Instead, we have, along with the capacity for effort, a compass called hope: a past that we can see, that we can remember, that can guide us along the unpredictable route, along with our commitment to beings now living and yet to be born, that commitment called love. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

US SENATOR

ELIZABETH WARREN

The Nation has been a fixture in our household for over thirty years. Throughout that time, and for more than a century before that, it has prodded, challenged and informed readers. It has demanded that we act on the progressive values that will make our communities, our nation, and the world fairer and more just for everyone. It is an indispensable voice in our political dialogue. I look forward to reading it for many years to come.

Beginning to See the Light

A veteran of the civil-rights movement offers an outline for social transformation in the United States.

JACK O'DELL

IN THE FALL OF 1979, THE REV. JESSE JACKSON INVITED ME TO ACCOMpany him on a ten-day visit to South Africa, coordinated by the African National Congress. Everywhere we went, from Cape Town to Durban, from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg, the Freedom Charter would come up at some point in our conversations. This document, drafted by the ANC, had been discussed and modified by gatherings all around the country before being adopted at a nationwide assembly in Kliptown in 1955. Its vision—of a South Africa with civil, human and economic rights for all—would serve until the end of apartheid to unite the freedom movement in all of its sectors and to inspire hope and confidence in ultimate victory, despite the pain of the struggle and the ruthlessness of the regime.

Two years later, I was privileged to be one of the people whom *The Nation* invited to take part in a US peace activists' tour of the NATO countries of Western Europe. We went in response to the Reagan administration's unilateral initiative to deploy nuclear-armed missiles in Europe, as well as the great concern that was being expressed in many parts of Europe about this decision. In the Netherlands, one of the groups we visited was the Women's Peace Committee at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. Near the end of a very cordial and interesting meeting, one of the women commented: "In 1940, the Germans came; they left in 1945. In 1945, the Americans came. When are they leaving?"

These two experiences, among many others, impressed upon me the idea of a Democracy Charter as a uniting vision for the diverse sectors of our social-change movement in the United States. The following version summarizes and updates ten points I first drafted in 2005—the fiftieth anniversary of the ANC's Freedom Charter—for a conference of US and Canadian social-change activists and academics at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Since then, as I've continued to revise the draft, study groups have formed around the country, from South Carolina to the Bay Area, to consider and update the charter as an outline of substantive democracy.

Most of the issues included in the Democracy Charter were chosen because they have been the object of public activity, led by a great variety of organizations, over a number of years. The Democracy Charter, summarized below, seeks to enlarge the public's understanding of the connectedness of these issues as a way to achieve a social transformation of American society. This is the ultimate purpose of our movement.

I. A national commitment to affordable housing. Initiatives to house the homeless (many of them families), as well as those who pay most of their income for cramped and dilapidated housing, would create jobs in construction and renovation. Such initiatives would also give us the opportunity to increase the proportion of our housing that uses sustainable energy. Negotiating realistic terms for homeowners who default on unsustainable mortgages can preserve neighborhoods otherwise destined to decay.

II. Freedom from the oppression and indignity of poverty. This would be achieved through socially useful jobs that pay a living wage as well as a comprehensive Social Security system. Standard measures of economic "growth" have proved irrelevant to the lived experience of most Americans. The severe and widespread need to which the $15-an-hour movement of low-wage workers responds would not exist in a robust democracy. Unemployment, which helps to hold down wages, often results from corporations moving overseas to increase profits and avoid taxes. The government must penalize those employers in proportion to the damage they do to American workers.

III. Education from early childhood through

Leaders of the African National Congress and 3,000 delegates meet to adopt the Freedom Charter in Kliptown, South Africa, 1955.

DRUM PHOTOGRAPHER © BAILEY'S ARCHIVE (1955)

college, available to all. Public schools nationwide are under threat of privatization through a systematic reduction of resources, combined with taxpayer-funded "alternatives" such as for-profit chains of corporate charter schools. A publicly operated education system that prepares youngsters to begin formal learning, then supports them as far as their ability and inclination take them, is key to strengthening citizen engagement, reducing poverty and revitalizing the economy.

IV. The right to an environment free of bigotry, violence and intolerance. This would be a profound expression of our irreversible commitment to human rights, including reproductive and LGBTQ rights. The reproductive rights of women and the rights of African-American children to equal access to public education, affirmed by the Supreme Court, continue to undergo a sustained attack, primarily from the political and religious right. This is often combined with unrelenting, though increasingly unsuccessful, efforts to consign LGBTQ people to outcast status. A principled, active defense of—and protections for—the entire fabric of human rights, as an indivisible whole, is the only way to guarantee respect for all.

We must eliminate the unfairness of basing healthcare prices upon satisfying corporate greed and the concerns of private investors.

V. A new foreign and military policy as an expression of our nation's democratic ideals. Our foreign policy should promote peace, cooperation with our neighbors throughout the Americas, and the future of the planet as our shared home. That means a new kind of defense budget, one in harmony with other domestic goals, not one designed to enrich the biggest corporate "defense" contractors and their stockholders while the public pays the bill. It also means that no longer will the US government produce, use or sell weapons—such as land mines, cluster bombs, depleted uranium shells and Agent Orange—that destroy the environment. The Vietnamese people are still suffering the catastrophic effects of a number of these weapons, which we shamefully used against them. And where and when was the authorization given by "We the People" for building several hundred US military bases in other countries?

As information about covert government programs is brought to light, public awareness of US activities overseas, both corporate and political, has been growing steadily—yet it has not reached the critical mass necessary to change our foreign and military policy. Fortunately, there are many examples of constructive change. Sweden's announcement that it would extend diplomatic relations to representatives of the Palestinian people carries forward the spirit of reconciliation and respect. Initiatives for peace, democracy and ecological sustainability, launched by our neighbors throughout the Americas, draw together the voices of indigenous peoples, nations, and communities that have suffered severely from colonialism and newer forms of corporate exploitation. Our struggle for a robust democracy in the United States will be strengthened to the extent that we embrace these progressive currents of thought and action.

VI. Universal single-payer health coverage. Healthcare costs have been a major source of financial insecurity, including bankruptcy, for American families, and an estimated 100,000 people die every year from illnesses contracted as patients in our hospitals.

The Affordable Care Act of 2010 has addressed some of the most glaring shortcomings of the exclusively private or employer-sponsored system. Unfortunately, it falls far short of what's still needed—and it remains, along with Medicare and Medicaid, under relentless assault by the right. The single-payer movement advocates a system practiced in Canada and most of Western Europe, in which the government pays the necessary expenses of medical care and also promotes practices that help maintain good health. This would eliminate the unfairness of basing prices upon satisfying corporate greed and the concerns of private investors, and of basing the quality of care upon a patient's ability to pay.

VII. A justice system absolutely fair to all. Murder with impunity, by law-enforcement officers or private vigilantes, violates both civil and human rights. Institutional racism has created a shocking racial imbalance in our jailed population. The existence of a prison-industrial complex directly violates the rehabilitation objective of the penal system in a robust democracy.

VIII. A farm economy restructured to rest on family and cooperative enterprise. Our millions of expert small farmers should not be sacrificed to the greed and unrestrained power of corporate monopolies in agriculture and marketing. Neither we as consumers, nor the environment in which we live, should be subjected to the harmful effects of industrial chemicals, genetically modified seeds, or drugs used to increase the profits in large-scale corporate farming. Everyone will benefit if traditional family farms, cooperatives and the new urban-community "food gardens" become our primary source of food production.

IX. Restoring, preserving and protecting our natural environment as a vital social inheritance for future generations. Reversing the present pattern of pollution and degradation will require government regulation of corporate activities that damage our air, water, soil and environmental resources such as parks—with substantial penalties for infractions. In Detroit, the clearly inalienable right to clean water was highlighted by struggles against the third-largest water-utility company in the country. "Self-regulation" has been amply proven to mean the absence of regulation.

X. The right to know that every vote will be counted. The assault on our voting system, which we have witnessed in successive federal elections, is now recognized as a nationwide problem of scandalous proportions. Today, our elections are conspicuously less honest than those of most Western industrialized countries. Fair voter access and the accurate tabulation of votes by accountable parties must be guaranteed, reinforced by the introduction of a system of proportional representation in all elections where applicable. Real democracy further requires an end to unlimited funding by corporate interests and the wealthy, along with the negative campaigning that erodes citizen confidence in the electoral system as a guarantor of our "inalienable rights."

Quite often in our staff meetings with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Atlanta, he would call our attention to the idea that "truth is the relatedness of facts." The relatedness of the facts outlined above summons us to look diligently at the true conditions in our country today. The Democracy Charter is meant to serve as a living entity and guide—hopefully transformational—enabling our nation to become a society of justice, peace and enduring friendship with our neighbors across the world. This is the "good news" that we strive to attain. This is the challenge that we embrace. We shall overcome. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

REV. JESSE JACKSON

The Nation has fought the good fight for freedom, peace and justice for 150 years. Founded by abolitionists, it was launched just as a new America was beginning, an America based on freedom and equality. Much later, *The Nation* published the early writings of James Baldwin and Alice Walker, and even had the good sense to endorse my candidacy for president in the 1988 primaries.

Under the leadership of Katrina vanden Heuvel, *The Nation* has every reason to be hopeful about its future. It is one of our most useful and honorable institutions, and I offer my best wishes and my thanks for *The Nation*'s first 150 years of keeping hope alive.

Saving the Commons

A neglected document from eight centuries ago has an urgent message about how to stop environmental destruction.

NOAM CHOMSKY

In a few months, we will be commemorating the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta—commemorating, but not celebrating; rather, mourning the blows it has suffered.

The first authoritative scholarly edition of Magna Carta was published by the eminent jurist William Blackstone in 1759. It was no easy task. As he wrote, "the body of the charter has been unfortunately gnawn by rats"—a comment that carries grim symbolism today, as we take up the task the rats left unfinished.

Blackstone's edition actually includes two charters: the Great Charter and the Charter of the Forest. The former is generally regarded as the foundation of Anglo-American law—in Winston Churchill's words, referring to its reaffirmation by Parliament in 1628, "the charter of every self-respecting man at any time in any land." Article 39 of the Great Charter held that "No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned," or otherwise harmed, "except by the lawful judgment of his equals and according to the law of the land," the essential sense of the doctrine of "presumption of innocence."

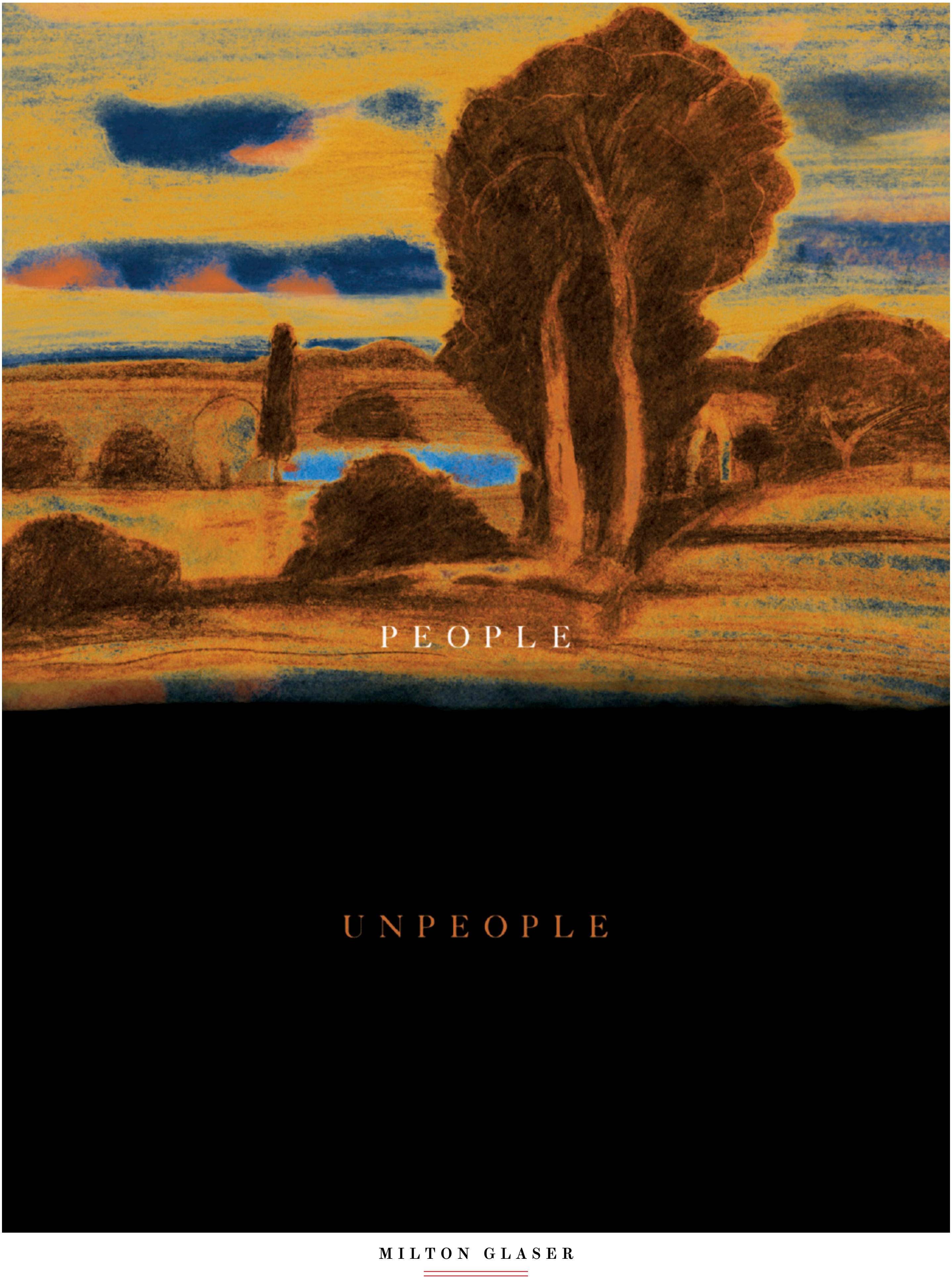
To be sure, the reach of the charter was limited. Nevertheless, as Eric Kasper observes in a scholarly review, "What began as a relatively small check on the arbitrary power of King John eventually led to succeeding generations finding ever more rights in Magna Carta and Article 39. In this sense, Magna Carta is a key point in a long development of the protection of rights against arbitrary executive power."

Crossing the Atlantic, the Great Charter was enshrined in the US Constitution as the promise that "no person shall…be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" and that "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury."

The wording seems expansive, but that is misleading. Excluded were "unpeople" (to borrow Orwell's useful concept), among them Native Americans, slaves and women, who under the British common law adopted by the founders were the property of their fathers, handed over to husbands. Indeed, it wasn't until 1975 that women gained the right to serve on juries in all fifty states.

The Fourteenth Amendment applied the "due process" provisions to states. The intent was to include freed slaves in the category of persons, but the effect was different. Within a few years, slaves who had technically been freed were delivered to a regime of criminalization of black life that amounted to "slavery by another name," to quote the title of Douglas Blackmon's evocative account of this crime, which is being re-enacted today. Instead, almost all of the actual court cases invoking the Fourteenth Amendment had to do with the rights of corporations. Today, these legal fictions—created and sustained by state power—have rights well beyond those of flesh-and-blood persons, not only by virtue of their wealth, immortality and limited liability, but also thanks to the mislabeled "free-trade" agreements, which grant them unprecedented rights unavailable to humans.

The constitutional lawyer in the White House has introduced further modifications. His Justice Department explained that "due process of law"—at least where "terrorism offenses" are concerned—is satisfied by internal deliberations within the executive branch. King John would have nodded in approval. The term "guilty" has also been given a refined interpretation: it now means "targeted for assassination by the White House." Furthermore, the burden of proof has been shifted to those already assassinated by executive whim. As *The New York Times* reported, "Mr. Obama embraced a disputed method for counting civilian casualties [that] in effect counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants…unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent." The guiding principles are clear: force reigns


PEOPLE
UNPEOPLE
MILTON GLASER

TESTIMONIALS

HARRY BELAFONTE

Controlling what people know is a critical component of shaping how they behave. In its 150 years of existence, *The Nation* has brought to the table of human needs a menu of truth. Its stories enlighten us, give us choices for ascertaining how to deal with the complexities of daily life, and fuel our need for honesty. Knowing that mortality is nonnegotiable, I express regret that I shall not be here to celebrate *The Nation*'s next 150 years. I sincerely hope its mission and its purpose will endure.

supreme; "law" and "justice" and other frivolities can be left to sentimentalists.

Problems do arise, however, when a candidate for genuine personhood is targeted. The issue arose after the murder of Anwar al-Awlaki, who was accused of inciting jihad in speech and writing as well as unspecified actions. A *New York Times* headline captured the general elite reaction when he was assassinated: "As the West Celebrates a Cleric's Death, the Mideast Shrugs." Some eyebrows were raised because Awlaki was an American citizen. But even these doubts were quickly stilled.

Let us now put the sad relics of the Great Charter aside and turn to Magna Carta's companion, the Charter of the Forest, which was issued in 1217. Its significance is perhaps even more pertinent today. As explained by Peter Linebaugh in his richly documented and stimulating history of Magna Carta, the Charter of the Forest called for protection of the commons from external power. The commons were the source of sustenance for the general population: food, fuel, construction materials, a form of welfare, whatever was essential for life.

In thirteenth-century England, the forest was no primitive wilderness. It had been carefully nurtured by its users over generations, its riches available to all. The great British social historian R.H. Tawney wrote that the commons were used by country people who lacked arable land. The maintenance of this "open field system of agriculture…reposed upon a common custom and tradition, not upon documentary records capable of precise construction. Its boundaries were often rather a question of the degree of conviction with which ancient inhabitants could be induced to affirm them, than visible to the mere eye of sense"—features of traditional societies worldwide to the present day.

By the eighteenth century, the charter had fallen victim to the rise of the commodity economy and capitalist practice and moral culture. As Linebaugh puts it, "The Forest Charter was forgotten or consigned to the gothic past." With the commons no longer protected for cooperative nurturing and use, the rights of the common people were restricted to what could not be privatized—a category that continues to shrink, to virtual invisibility.

Capitalist development brought with it a radical revision not only of how the commons are treated, but also of how they are conceived. The prevailing view today is captured by Garrett Hardin's influential argument that "Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all." This is the famous "tragedy of the commons": that what is not owned will be destroyed by individual avarice. A more technical formulation is given in economist Mancur Olson's conclusion that "unless the number of individuals is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests.*" Accordingly, unless the commons are handed over to private ownership, brutal state power must be invoked to save them from destruction. This conclusion is plausible—if we understand "rationality" to entail a fanatic dedication to the individual maximization of short-term material gain.

These forecasts have received some challenge. The late Elinor Ostrom won the Nobel Prize in economics in 2009 for her work showing the superiority of user-managed fish stocks, pastures, woods, lakes and groundwater basins. The historical review in her study, *Governing the Commons*, ignores the Charter of the Forest and the practice over centuries of nurturing the commons, but Ostrom did conclude that the success stories she'd investigated might at least "shatter the convictions of many policy analysts that the *only* way to solve [common-pool resource] problems is for external authorities to impose full private property rights or centralized regulation."

As we now understand all too well, it is what is *privately* owned, not what is held in common, that faces destruction by avarice, bringing the rest of us down with it. Hardly a day passes without more confirmation of this fact. As hundreds of thousands of people marched in the streets of Manhattan on September 21 to warn of the dire threat of the ongoing ecological destruction of the commons, *The New York Times* reported that "global emissions of greenhouse gases jumped 2.3 percent in 2013 to record levels," while in the United States, emissions rose 2.9 percent, reversing a recent decline. August 2014 was reported to be the hottest on record, and *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association* predicted that the number of ninety-plus-degree days in New York could triple in three decades, with much more severe effects in warmer climates.

It is well understood that most of the world's fossil-fuel reserves must remain in the ground if an environmental disaster for humankind is to be averted, but under the logic of state-supported capitalist institutions, the private owners of those reserves are racing to exploit them to the fullest. Chevron abandoned a small renewable-energy program because its profits are far greater from fossil fuels. And as *Bloomberg Businessweek* reports, ExxonMobil announced "that its laserlike focus on fossil fuels is a sound strategy, regardless of climate change." This is all in accord with the capitalist doctrine of "rationality."

A small part of the remaining commons is federal land. Despite the complaints of the energy lobbies, the amount of crude oil produced from onshore federal lands in 2013 was the highest in over a decade, according to the Interior Department, and it has expanded steadily under the

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British artist Cornelia Parker at work on Magna Carta (An Embroidery). *Commissioned by Oxford University to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, Parker's work is a stitch replica of the Great Charter's Wikipedia entry and measures more than forty feet long.*

PHOTOS: JOSEPH TURP, COURTESY OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY, RUSKIN SCHOOL OF ART

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We hope to add to this list.

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Obama administration. The business pages of newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are exultant about "the boom in American energy production," which shows "no signs of slowing down, keeping the market flush with crude and gasoline prices low." Predictions are that the United States will "add a million more barrels of oil in daily production over the next year," while also "expanding its exports of refined products like gasoline and diesel." One dark cloud is perceived, however: maximizing production "might have a catastrophic effect" in "the creation of a major glut." And with climate-change denier James Inhofe now chairing the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and others like him in positions of power, we can expect even more wonderful news for our grandchildren.

Despite these long odds, the participants in the People's Climate March are not alone. There is no slight irony in the fact that their major allies throughout the world are the surviving indigenous communities that have upheld their own versions of the Charter of the Forest. In Canada, the Gitxaala First Nation is filing a lawsuit opposing a tar-sands pipeline passing through its territory, relying on recent high-court rulings on indigenous rights. In Ecuador, the large indigenous community played an essential part in the government's offer to keep some of its oil in the ground, where it should be, if the rich countries would compensate Ecuador for a fraction of the lost profits. (The offer was refused.) The one country governed by an indigenous majority, Bolivia, held a World People's Conference in 2010, with 35,000 participants from 140 countries. It produced a People's Agreement calling for sharp reductions in emissions, as well as a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. These are key demands of indigenous communities all over the world.

So, as we commemorate the two charters after 800 years, all of this gives us ample reason for serious reflection—and for determined action. **150th**

As we now understand all too well, it is what is *privately* owned, not what is held in common, that faces destruction by avarice.

Traces of Light

Reflections on the future of film, or:
How a dying medium has come back to life.

STUART KLAWANS

I CRIED TO CAPTAIN KIRK TO SAVE ME, BUT HE COULD NOT HEAR. I sought the Little Tramp as my companion, but Grumpy Cat hid him from view.

Cinema is gone—everyone agrees. And yet cinema also abides, if only so that Jean-Luc Godard can go on delivering valedictions to what it used to be. Like the history of which it's a part, the moving image has not finished its work, nor is it likely to anytime soon. I think it's just gotten a little too much into itself.

It's a disconcerting situation, given that cinema used to be so expansive, with movies surfing over the world on the waves of modernity's Big Bang. That primordial explosion, which Eric Hobsbawm called the "dual revolution," sent industrial capitalism and political liberalism bursting together across the globe from their point of origin in Western Europe, burning down, building up again and transforming whatever stood in their path. About a century into the process, in a rented room in Paris, the unstoppable conflagration flickered across a public screen for the first time.

The dual revolution's new medium was a relatively modest technical innovation—one "without a future," as Louis Lumière thought—tinkered into existence at the end of the nineteenth century's more impressive breakthroughs, such as the railroads, photography and electric light. Cinema was also a latecomer among the social and cultural innovations of the dual revolution: new forms of spectatorship and consumption that ranged, as Miriam Hansen has written, "from world expositions and department stores to the more sinister attractions of melodrama, phantasmagoria, wax museums and morgues." To this roster I would add panoramic paintings, including one of particular interest for a magazine founded in 1865: Paul Philippoteaux's cyclorama *The Battle of Gettysburg*, whose encompassing hyperrealism first astonished the public in 1883.

Many types of spectacle were available to a world in transformation; but it was film, especially, that the tremors of the nineteenth century carried along as they rippled into the twentieth, turning a mere novelty into modernity's most all-consuming mode of expression. Soon, everything had to be filmed: from scenes along the Nile to Shackleton's expedition to Antarctica, from a staged version of the coronation of King George V to the actual Passaic textile strike. So rapidly did movie cameras spread across the globe, in such an unceasing project of documenting and fabricating, that André Bazin famously likened cinema to the art of mummification, observing that both answered an urgent psychological need to arrest and preserve transient reality.

I remain loyal to Bazin and will come back to him shortly. For the moment, though, I will ask you to think of early cinema's best-known images, which present a picture not of formaldehyde-laced anxiety but unbounded dynamism. The train chugs into La Ciotat station. The space capsule pokes the moon in its eye. The Little Tramp stands on deck with his fellow immigrants, staring at the Statue of Liberty. And so the images continued throughout the twentieth century, from the stagecoach rolling across the valley to the spaceship flying to Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite. Film, for most of its life, has projected the feelings of a society that believed it was going somewhere.

This bustling, outward-looking aspect of the moving image was more than a matter of appearances. Film became pre-eminent in the twentieth century not only by giving mass audiences what they wanted to see but by adopting—and sometimes helping to originate—the new society's industrial and financial developments. By the early 1920s, commercial cinema had become the first art form organized on the principles of the assembly line and the cartel. By the late 1940s, American studios were becoming pioneers in outsourcing production around the world and shifting business operations across borders, moving capital according to the needs of trade agreements and currency fluctuations. Cinema

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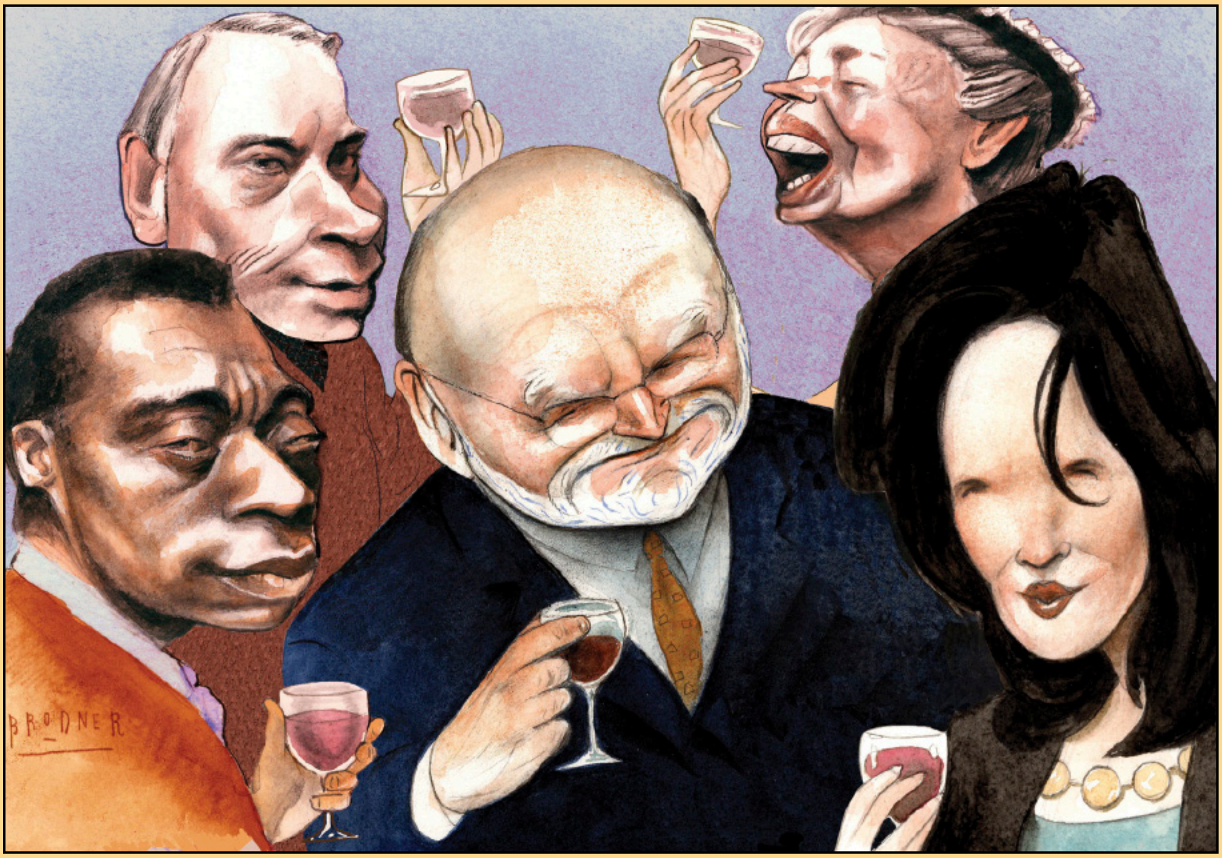

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even found new opportunities for expansion when its main corporate rival, radio, underwent the vast reorganization required for television. The TV stations had airtime to fill. Movies rushed in to fill the void.

POETRY ARCHIVE

January 25, 1965

Dream Song

John Berryman

The surly cop lookt out at me in sleep
insect-like. Guess, who was the insect.
I'd asked him in my robe
& hospital gown in the elevator politely
why someone saw so many police around,
and without speaking he looked.

A meathead, and of course he was armed, to creep
across my nervous system some time ago wrecked.
I saw the point of Loeb
at last, to give oneself over to crime wholly,
baffle, torment, roar laughter, or without sound
attend while he is cooked

until with trembling hands hoist I my true
& legal ax, to get at the brains. I never liked brains—
it's the texture & the thought—
but I will like them now, spooning at you,
my guardian, slowly, until at length the rains
lose heart and the sun flames out.

THEN THE SHOCK WAVES of the dual revolution stopped moving outward. It's hard to fix a date for the turning point. You might choose 1973 and the OPEC oil embargo, or 1975 and the end of the Vietnam War. I tend to think that the expansive dynamism continued beyond the fall of the Berlin Wall, as capital burst the final barriers and flooded into the former Soviet bloc. The money by then was already pouring into China; it had been doing so since the early 1980s. In the 1990s, it flowed more easily than ever throughout the rest of the globe as well, bringing with it a triumphant neoliberal ideology.

At which point—too late—Wile E. Coyote saw the boulder he'd loaded into his giant Acme slingshot rocketing to the limit of the elastic and sproinging back, straight at his head.

In Wile E.'s honor, we might title the recent history of the world and its moving images "the Great Rebound." Two centuries of ceaseless outward movement have given way to collapse and recession and retrenchment, punctuated by moments of false prosperity. People multiply without having any place new to grow into, until the face of the earth is covered by the swarming of economic migrants and political refugees. Personal debt mounts; jobs, natural resources, ice caps and coastlines shrink. Our great cities, which once were bubbling cauldrons of artistic and social invention, have congealed into sparsely populated clusters of superluxury housing—storehouses for the wealth of absentee billionaires—serviced by a reserve army of the dispirited. The very language of progress has atrophied. The best-publicized adversaries of neoliberalism no longer speak of marching into the glorious socialist future; instead, they spiral backward, seeking to recover the purity of a vanished and largely imaginary caliphate.

As the world turns in on itself, the noisy, dirty, propulsive innovations that it once found fascinating have been replaced by germ-free technologies useful for control and surveillance: genetic and digital engineering. The former directs our thoughts toward the interior of the body, where life might be managed cell by cell; the latter, toward the continual monitoring of one another's activity. The selfie and the spy-satellite photo are the close-up and the panoramic shot of the globe's real-time movie.

As for the movies that label themselves as entertainments, I can think of three visual tropes in particular that characterize the present era: the wormhole in space that proves to be a conduit into one's own mind; the digital gibberish that scrolls down a computer screen, showing us all that we can know of the world; and the violent act that is abruptly arrested in midair, permitting us to enjoy a 360-degree view of its superfluity. These emblems of stasis and self-enclosure were first brought together (to the best of my knowledge, and horror) in *The Matrix*. By now, I must have seen them all another thousand times.

We have left behind the era when Annette Michelson, writing about *2001: A Space Odyssey*, could propose that cinema in its essence is a kinesthetic voyage. Today, even if a movie is projected in 3-D and is set aboard the starship *Enterprise*, the picture rarely draws you into a journey (just the opposite—the images pop out at you, pinning you to your seat), and Captain Kirk goes nowhere except into his own past. That's the experience as it plays out in theaters. Outside the theaters, where most people now do their viewing, kinesthesia has become utterly impossible, since the screen is no bigger than your hand, or sits in the corner of the living room where you've spent eight hours binge-watching *House of Cards*.

Many observers describe this shift in the culture of moving images as an inevitable result of technological change, which has made it convenient and economical for producers and distributors to convert from a photographic to a digital format. Maybe so; but I think this deterministic analysis probably turns the story on its head. It certainly doesn't relate technique to content and preference—or attempt to explain, for example, why the eternally plucky Little Tramp has almost disappeared from sight, whereas hundreds of thousands of videos of a miserable-looking cat are posted on YouTube. It seems to me that we have hurried to embrace digital images in their most common forms not because they're all that's made available to us, but because we want to stare into our hands and sit inside all night. Is it any wonder? As we live through the Great Rebound, we retreat within, and the moving image comes with us.

Cinema got its start as a relatively modest technical innovation—one "without a future," as Louis Lumière thought.

LIKE ALL SWEEPING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES, the one I've just sketched out takes account of everything except what's really interesting—the details. Still, there might be some truth to it, including the escape clause: our present situation is not mandated by technology or anything else. We retain some freedom to choose our future. The question, as always, is what to choose.

I want to be cautious in proposing an answer. The most obvious wish to express in *The Nation* might be for the industry to welcome a rising proportion of women, queers and people from backgrounds other than European. This would certainly be a tremendous change for the better—but not, perhaps, a radical departure. The trend toward workplace diversity in the moving image, though far from complete and far too late in coming, has been ongoing, more a rolling aftershock of the dual revolution than the eruption of a new phase in history.

I also don't want to overstate the potential benefits of my choice for cinema's future. If I should sound as though the culture of moving images can have a solid effect on the world, rather than a wavering influence, I would fall into the peculiar form of exaggeration that substitutes artworks, and arguments about them, for political and social action. Encountered most often in universities and the art-gallery network, this swell-headed insularism seems to me to be another evidence of the collapse of our sense of possibilities, rather than an effective way to open the horizon again.

Finally, I need to acknowledge that the future of the moving image, radical or otherwise, is now being decided by a bunch of 10-year-olds. My ideas won't greatly affect what they like.

All that said, I offer my prescription anyway, in the conviction that my taste, and yours, can be important. Our tastes give us something that we really care about to discuss with one another. They even help keep alive the old belief—articulated at the height of the dual revolution and still valid today—that we are not the objects of history but its subjects, who deserve a voice. What you and I want for the future of the moving image will make a difference in the world, however uncertain in magnitude—and so I will say that I continue to base my preference on Bazin, and on his excitement about cinema as the approximate realization of a desire.

By the early 1920s, cinema had become the first art form organized on the principles of the assembly line and the cartel.

In our anxiety about death, Bazin thought, we are always trying to grasp at life: its surface appearance, its movement and texture, its abundance. The goal is unattainable, but that doesn't matter. What counts is that we want to reach out. For this purpose, he wrote, film is especially useful, because its images are traces of the light that has bounced off objects. Film gives us the reassurance of being in physical contact with the world we see on the screen, at however great a remove of space and time.

The transition to digital imagery has severed that contact, but it can't do away with the desire. Only we can stifle that. If we want a radical future for the moving image, then, and for our world, the first thing we might do is to pick up our heads, turn our eyes outward again (however adverse the circumstances) and trust our urge to hold on to life.

We have held on to death more than enough. Visit that precursor of *The Birth of a Nation*, the Gettysburg Cyclorama, and you will see how a spectacle from the era of pre-cinema once satisfied the public appetite for funerary monuments. Countless movies, TV shows and video games today continue to cater to that appetite. Think of the raids and battles that are endlessly revisualized as if through a repetition compulsion, the defunct pop stars whose triumphs and demise are dismally "celebrated" over and over, the genocides that are mindlessly re-enacted as plot devices for adventure stories (set in the past or an alternative present, or on the future planet Mongo), the shooter games in which the only real action is to die and go back to the start. Using methods that may be more or less grandiose, with or without zombies in the story arc, an ongoing line of image-makers has preserved and glorified only the things that are already dead. They've never even tried to touch the heart of life as it's beating.

In a radical future, though, the moving image will capture without mummifying. This is not a prophecy; it's

DOUG CHAYKA

an observation, drawn from the different possible futures that have already begun. When I started writing about films for *The Nation*—it was, by chance, around the time when the Great Rebound was making itself felt—I discovered that the people who made me most hopeful were working on, and smudging, the border between fiction and documentary. Chantal Akerman, Su Friedrich, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Gianni Amelio—to throw out just a handful of names—have made the last two decades of the twentieth century an exciting time to think about the moving image. Did these filmmakers achieve anything beyond a negligible market share? No. Would it be possible, in a cynical mood, to say that I'd bet on the wrong people, because nothing they did back then is now being felt? Of course. The one thing that cynicism is always good for is denial.

And yet the existence of an appetite for life—a large and widely shared appetite—became obvious in 2014, when Richard Linklater came out with *Boyhood*. Here was a new version of the impossible project, realized more vividly and popularly than ever: a record of the awkward, unpredictable, beautiful maturation of one person's life, presented within fictional circumstances, but with the actual time of unfolding made as miraculously manifest as if a sweet puff of breath had come off the screen. Audiences were enthralled. Bazin might have wept with joy.

I won't call on others to copy what Linklater did in *Boyhood*, because nobody really can. (Besides, imitation is precisely what we don't need.) I will simply observe that *Boyhood* shows that a more outgoing, convivial, exploratory and humane future is with us now, and more than a few people want it.

Whether we pursue that desire is up to us. I say let's boldly go where no one has gone before. **150th**

Following the Sound

John Coltrane's music of the future past is teaching a new generation of artists to bend time and space.

GENE SEYMOUR

YOU'D THINK THERE WAS NO POSSIBLE UNIVERSE IN WHICH A very white insurance executive and a very black musical renegade could find anything resembling common ground. And yet the inscrutable mysteries lurking beneath Wallace Stevens's poem "The Man With the Blue Guitar" and the kind of anxious, ecstatic energy leaping from saxophonist Albert Ayler's incantatory composition "Bells" converge at a single line in Stevens's poem: "A tune beyond us, yet ourselves."

Let's pick up this conversation, arbitrarily, in a 1966 interview that Albert and his brother, trumpeter Donald Ayler, are having with Nat Hentoff, who asks how best to listen to the "free jazz" they're playing. "One way not to," Don says, "is to focus on the notes and stuff like that. Instead, try to move your imagination toward the sound. It's a matter of following the sound."

"You have to relate sound to sound inside the music," Albert says. "I mean you have to try to listen to everything together."

The zeitgeist had worked itself into one of its intermittent exasperations with jazz, peering down as if to demand: "Are you *still* here?"

"Follow the sound," Don repeats, "the pitches, the colors. You have to watch them move."

"This music is good for the mind," Albert continues. "It frees the mind. If you just listen, you find out more about yourself."

Is Wallace Stevens nodding? Does he understand that these men with whom he might not otherwise have ever bothered to make eye contact on a street corner either in New York (where the Aylers blew their horns into infinite space) or in Hartford (where Stevens walked to work every day) are in tune with his blue-guitar player? I once dared to think such communion was possible, but I didn't feel empowered to suggest it because political and cultural barriers wouldn't let me. I dare to now. It's a new century, after all.

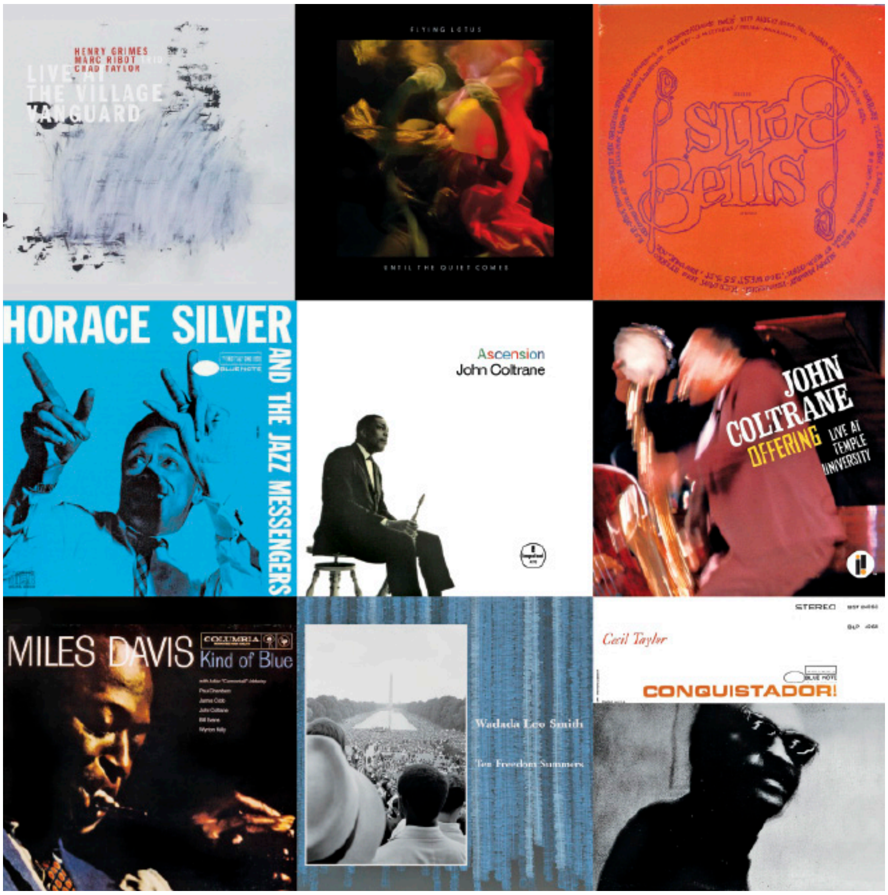
Bear with me. Back when LPs ruled the earth, and I would play jazz music that was not in any way tethered to conventional rhythms or harmonies, there was always some older person—whether it was my father or one of his contemporaries—who, upon coming within earshot of an especially dissonant bar or two, would invoke variations of the following judgment: "Man, those cats sound… *lost*."

For musicians to be deemed "lost," their music didn't necessarily have to be classified as "free jazz," "avant-garde," "far out" or simply "Outside." In their collected correspondence, published in 2000 as *Trading Twelves*, Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray thought that the relatively accessible modernism of Miles Davis and Horace Silver in the late 1950s had strayed so far beyond the verities of the blues and swing that Ellison and Murray had embraced in their 20s that they, too, declared them "lost" souls. History being what we imagine it to be, I believed that such withering dismissals of progressive music would be worn away with time, as there would be more people like me—whether younger or older—who'd become so accustomed to such nontraditional sounds as to render the appellations "far out" and "avant-garde" as quaint as "gear" and "fab." It's nice to dream.

AS FAR AS SOME PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED, jazz isn't just "lost"—it's dead. Forget the distinctions between old and new, hot and cool, traditional and progressive, "Inside" and "Outside." A *Washington Post* op-ed last August proclaimed that jazz was "boring…overrated…washed up." This came days after *The New Yorker* put words into saxophonist emeritus Sonny Rollins's mouth likening the sound of his instrument in full cry to that of "a scared pig." The zeitgeist had worked itself into one of its intermittent exasperations with jazz, peering down at the music's relatively low stature among its more lucrative peers as if to demand: "Are you *still* here?"

This revisionist spirit, part of what the *New York Times* jazz critic Nate Chinen would later deem jazz music's "year of complaint," may have emboldened Geoff Dyer—whose works include *But Beautiful*, a 1991 collection of evocative life stories of Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus and other jazz immortals—to write a blog post for *The New York Review of Books* titled "Catastrophic Coltrane," through which he evaluates, from a mostly jaundiced point of view, *Offering: Live at Temple University* (Resonance), a recording of a November 1966 performance by John Coltrane's second, more experimental quartet, which was re-released in September 2014. The piece represents a recent and prominent entry in an ongoing back and forth that may have started even before Coltrane's death at 40, just eight months after the Temple appearance. The key question: whether the great tenor saxophonist's bold forays into previously uncharted musical territory were propelling jazz music toward a transcendent state—or shoving it off a cliff.

Many passionate, often eloquent arguments have been made supporting one or the other contention. There's no question on which side Dyer lands: he considers Coltrane to have arrived near life's end at "a terminus, a brick wall, a dead end or, in the cosmic scheme of things, some kind of interstellar void." In other words, as my dad's friends might say, Trane was *lost*. A drag to consider, but given the recent evidence of what's been characterized as "jazz bashing" in the mainstream media, the real issue at this point in the music's history is whether anybody even cares whether free jazz, as Dyer wrote, "had run its course—come up against its limits—while the course was being run and the limits breached."



I have had my own back and forth with the legacy of "free jazz," and, much as the mainstream has done with the whole of jazz, I am sometimes ready to declare it a dead issue. Until, that is, I find myself once again caught up in, say, the sonic maelstrom of "Ascension," Coltrane's polyphonic orchestral abstraction, which will mark its half-century of existence sometime this year; or diving headfirst into one of Cecil Taylor's extended, spontaneous piano solos, which sprawl and recombine into some new and unfamiliar shape with every encounter; or compelling my senses to engage once again with the keening, howling inventions of the ill-fated tenor saxophonist Albert Ayler, who—as with Coltrane, Taylor and other wild rovers of the Great Outside—sought to make something almost organic and living out of his determinedly unconventional improvisations.

Given that most of these innovations were forged in the 1960s, it's tempting to think of them, as Dyer suggests, as belonging solely to their era, and thus with little to offer the twenty-first century. I'm not as sure of this as I used to be, especially given my recent encounters with artists and writers who still claim what was then considered "avant-garde" jazz as the foundation of their collective will to experiment, to extend their resources and push against their limits. Most of the painters I know generally prefer sounds that leap from the walls to goad their imaginations. Jackson Pollock, whose dripping-brush dynamics were often compared to the modernist sounds of bebop running concurrently along America's post–World War II cutting edge, preferred listening to the mostly prewar jazz of Sidney Bechet and Fats Waller. Nevertheless, those sounds jumped and spiraled into his studio as willfully as the patterns he wrought into being. In so doing, he made

TESTIMONIALS

DANNY GOLDBERG

MUSIC PRODUCER

The American left has always contained a cacophonous assortment of passionate (and often grumpy) beings: visionaries and angry idiots; saints and provocateurs; rationalists and mystics; artists and policy wonks; those who live mostly in the past, and those who thrust themselves far into the future. Having read *The Nation* since my teenage years in the late 1960s, I remain amazed at its ability to encompass that entire range of energies. While dozens of media comets have blazed for a time and then crashed to earth, *The Nation* has been a lighthouse whose vivid beams shine through the fogs of lefty neurosis and self-destruction, fearlessly opposing authoritarianism, oligarchy, and whatever trendy philosophies du jour are cooked up to protect the privileged few at the expense of the public at large. Its uniqueness and relevance have uncannily gotten stronger in the twenty-first century.

art that resisted easy interpretation, indeed any interpretation whatsoever. It was the kind of art that to this day challenges people to find their own harmony, or connection, with its singular logic. For me, it has always been odd, at the very least, that white artists in most fields have often been encouraged (or, less generously, indulged) to stray outside the lines in pursuit of their own vision, while musicians of color have been scolded, even by their peers, for doing the same. Maybe this always happens in creative endeavors. I'm sure somebody somewhere declared Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism "dead ends." Unless I'm wrong. Anyway, I can see forthcoming generations of "creatives" encountering avatars of progressive jazz music as "found objects" to make their own brushes and other implements move space and time.

There are reasons to believe such inspiration is already taking hold. Guitarist Marc Ribot has deployed some of the outer-limits compositions yielded by Coltrane and Ayler in a trio that includes Ayler's onetime bassist Henry Grimes. Wadada Leo Smith, a key figure in the influentially experimental Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), was shortlisted for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for his epic work for large ensemble, *Ten Freedom Summers* (Cuneiform), whose design and execution keep faith with the methodology of the 1960s avant-garde. And *Offering*, despite Dyer's misgivings, surprised music-industry insiders by remaining in the upper reaches of the *Billboard* jazz charts for several weeks, despite being available only on LP and compact disc (and, as of this writing, still not available for digital download).

I'm more reluctant than ever these days to daydream a world where people take the time necessary to work their way into music whose secrets aren't easily accessible. But if you believe that nature abhors a vacuum (eventually), then perhaps you can imagine a time when the thick walls of white noise and sonic cheese processed for mass diversion will be breached by something that sounds, at first, like chaos, but then works its way into the zeitgeist. In more up-to-the-minute contexts, you have such intriguing players as Steven Ellison, *aka* Flying Lotus, remolding rap, hip-hop, jazz fusion and electronic music into a form so distinctive and shape-shifting that all the old terminology, even "jazz" itself, may have to be tossed aside for a phrase or compound name we can't yet conceive. What's pried open by a Flying Lotus could make it more likely that future listeners won't merely accessorize sound; they'll follow it, watch it move, make something of their own out of the colors and the pitches. Just as the Ayler brothers once suggested. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

OLIVER STONE

Having come from a conservative upbringing, I discovered *The Nation* late in life—only in the early 1980s. But it has certainly affected me in profound ways, by opening my imagination to an alternative way of seeing the world.

I am grateful to *The Nation* for its 150 years of consistent, enlightened journalism. We so desperately need it as our country slips further and further into a militarized security state.

Skin in the Game

Why the future of sports is too important to leave to bigoted businessmen and greedy corporations.

DAVE ZIRIN

I LOVE SPORTS, BUT I HATE SO MUCH OF WHAT SPORTS HAVE BECOME. Playing sports should be an opportunity, especially for children, to exercise, make friends and, heaven forbid, have fun. As for the pro leagues, they have been and always will be a business first and foremost, but they should also be a sweet escape after a tough day—instead of something that makes you feel used and even dirty about enjoying.

If sports are ever going to be reclaimed, we need to put our John Lennon glasses on and actually start by daring to imagine. We need a new vision of what sports could look like, if they were run on a set of principles that weren't about vacuuming every last dollar from our pockets.

So imagine a saner sports world—it's easy if you try.

Imagine expanded recess time and daily physical education in our public schools—two things in short supply across the country—so that kids have the space and freedom to learn to love play, regardless of some grown-up's judgment about whether they are "any good."

Imagine a pro-sports world where the owners paid for their own damn stadiums.

Imagine a youth sports world that is not professionalized—one built around giving kids a lifelong love of healthy competition and teamwork instead of the ego-fulfillment of adults.

Imagine youth sports teams that aren't rigidly segregated by gender, so that boys and girls who want to play together *can* play together—and kids who don't see themselves as either a "boy" or a "girl" don't need to feel excluded from what should be adventures in positive socialization. Let sports be something other than the first step toward the alienation that can fester between men and women. And if girls want their own teams, let them not only have access, but also equal fields and equipment.

Imagine a youth sports world that does not feel like a place where you don't belong if you're part of the LGBT community. Imagine a young men's sports world where homophobia and violence against women are completely contrary to the values enforced by the locker room.

Imagine a college sports system without the NCAA! No more would we hear from a multibillion-dollar cartel policing a system of indentured servitude. The fact that the NCAA's two revenue-producing sports happen to revolve around the talents of young black men speaks volumes. Stop the theft of black wealth through college sports, and instead treat players like the campus employees they are. And if they also want to pursue a degree, that should be encouraged—even highly incentivized. But we would all be better off without such profound hypocrisy and exploitation in our midst.

Imagine an end to *all* sports cartels. Imagine there's no FIFA; no International Olympic Committee, too. Which doesn't mean no more World Cup or Olympics—it just means an end to these two thoroughly corrupt, thoroughly discredited organizations that come into communities like neoliberal wrecking

NATEE K JINDAKUM

balls, bringing debt, displacement and the militarization of public space. We need a World Cup that reflects the beauty of the play on the field. We don't need a World Cup that exploits the passion of fans for the benefit of the real-estate, construction, private-security and weapons industries. We need an Olympics that takes us back to the amateur ideal, highlighting sports that are normally ignored and showcasing the remarkable athleticism of women and men across the world—not an excuse for a host of construction projects that people would otherwise reject.

Imagine a sports media that did not live down to the words of Hunter S. Thompson, who once wrote that sportswriters are "a rude and brainless subculture of fascist drunks" and "a gang of vicious monkeys jerking off in a zoo cage." The sports media should be holding the corrupt scandalmongers of sports responsible for the communities that they call home. Instead, the media are far too often cheerleaders for or broadcast partners with the very people they should hold accountable.

IMAGINE A PRO-SPORTS WORLD WHERE OWNERS didn't exploit our love for local teams to fleece municipalities out of billions of dollars. Imagine if they paid for their own damn stadiums.

Imagine a pro-sports world where owners did not use the public money they received as engines for their own political pet projects. No more money laundering through sports to support reactionary political agendas—as in Orlando, where the DeVos family has provided seed money for the Family Research Council to propagate homophobia and bigotry, and has also taken hundreds of millions in public funds.

Imagine, if you can, a pro-sports world without owners. "Why don't we have the owners play half the games?" the new National Basketball Players Association executive director, Michele Roberts, asked rhetorically, speaking to *ESPN The Magazine*. "There would be no money if not for the players." If taxpayers are paying for stadiums, why do we even need team owners? Imagine if every team operated like the Green Bay Packers—owned by 360,000 fans, with concession money going to local charities and never a threat that the team will be ripped away for a sweeter tax deal in another state. In other words, imagine teams that are a life raft for a community instead of an albatross around its neck.

Imagine a pro-sports world that didn't use our love of sports as a delivery system for the next war. We don't need Gen. David Petraeus flipping the opening coin at the Super Bowl any more than we need warplanes flying over the stadium. As Mary Tillman, the mother of the late Pat Tillman, once said to me: "Camaraderie is important to all humans, and I think the camaraderie of sports provides the most reward. Many young men join the military in order to get that feeling of belonging, that feeling of brotherhood. It is irresponsible to try to entice young people into military service with subliminal messages." Sports is not war, and war is not a game. Sports—not to mention the soldiers—deserve better.

George Orwell once wrote: "Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting." I do not agree with this in general, but it remains an apt description of sports at their worst. However, there is no reason why sports must always reach for the lowest common denominator.

Imagine if the camaraderie, teamwork and positive experiences that sports provide at their best were universal in every locker room. Imagine if sports were used to actually fight racism instead of promoting Native American mascots. Imagine if sports were used as a force against sexual assault instead of (as we've seen far too often) a cocoon of rape culture. Imagine if sports were a place where everyone felt included, because the idea of being on a team whose members stand up for one another is what really matters.

That is a sports world—not to mention a real world—worth fighting for. **150th**

Imagine if sports were a place where everyone felt included, because the idea of teamwork is what really matters.

Home

E.L. DOCTOROW

1.

There has always been another world. In Neolithic times, they built megaliths, steles, timed to the solstices—so they had some astronomical sense. Failing that, there was always a saber-toothed tiger to run them down. In the Grecian Bronze Age was invented the cast of maniac characters known as the gods—each with a different competitive function usually attached to features of the natural world, but showing clearly an awareness of something in existence other than humankind. The pre-Socratics scientized this and spoke of elemental forces that powered the world, and they argued as to which were more elemental than others—water, fire, air or earth. Then came Democritus with his astonishing theory of the invisible atom as the basis of everything. Plato allegorized the problem, describing a cave of firelit shadows where most men lived, unaware of the sun outside. All of this was, of course, monotheisticized by the Abrahamic religions—one supreme Reality with His own reasons, His dos and don'ts. And in the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant spoke of "things in themselves" as being beyond our phenomenological knowing—that the world was something else than what we could actually know, captured as we were in our own minds.

John Searle is a contemporary philosopher with an unalterable belief in “things in themselves.” That makes him, philosophically, a Realist. Reality, in his refreshing advanced diction, is composed of “brute facts,” which for Searle consist entirely “of physical particles in fields of force, and in which some of these particles are organized into systems that are conscious biological beasts, such as ourselves.” The examples he cites of such ur-Reality are “mountains, planets, H_2O molecules, rivers, crystals, and babies.” I would include the climatic biomes. But the examples of Reality are endless, of course, and include the stars in the skies, the skies and, in fact, what we understand as the entire universe. So Searle finds it convenient to wrap up Reality by reference to “the atomic theory of matter” and “natural selection.” These, he says, are the constituent facts of “a world independent of our representations of it.”

Our knowledge brings with it a cosmological arrogance that can be most compactly described as the anthropic principle.

What we are left with is the world of our own devising, to which Searle gives the traditional term “social reality.” Social reality is institutional, a matter of our historical invention. “Money, property, marriage, governments, elections, football games, cocktail parties” are Searle’s deftly chosen examples of social reality. They are factual, but they require “human institutions for their existence.” By way of alerting those keenly assured of the leftist subtexts of all philosophic thought, however conservative, I would add as examples of social reality the National Rifle Association, oil and coal companies, and *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

The work of Searle’s from which I’ve quoted is *The Construction of Social Reality* (the Free Press edition, copyright ©1995 by Searle). We need not follow the intricacies of his discussion of social reality, whose metaphysics fascinate him—how, he asks, do we get from atomic particles to this?—nor linger with his insistent defense of Realism. I give him all that and take his two realities for my own purposes.

POETRY ARCHIVE

April 25, 1994

Now and Forever

Allen Ginsberg

I’ll settle for Immortality—
Not thru the body
Not thru the eyes
Star spangled high mountains
waning moon over Aspen peaks;
But thru words, thru the breath
of long sentences
loves I have, heart beating
still,
inspiration continuous, exhalation of
cadenced affection
These immortal survive America,
survive the fall of States
Departure of my body,
mouth dumb dust
This verse broadcasts desire,
accomplishment of Desire
Now and forever boys can read
girls ream, old men cry
Old women sigh
youth still come.

7/19/92, Aspen

2.

To speak of the construction of social reality is to affirm the remarkable history of our species, which, as we tell our children, invented the wheel, made fire, discovered farming, built ships to sail the seas, and invented railroads, horseless carriages, aircraft, instant communication over great distances—all in an endless story of human progress through millions of years, advancing in its modes of social organization from tribes to nation-states, from kings and despots to parliaments, from designated slaves to free people living now in vast, electrically powered and digitized cities with hospitals, libraries, museums and theaters, with poets of many languages, saloons, stock markets, churches, universities, zoos, national treasuries, and streets filled with the literate and well clothed. (If murderous war has been a constant, no one would think to claim for us angelicism.)

And within this historic world, the real world of the “brute facts,” genetically manipulated or penetrated with particle accelerators, seems to be surprisingly unresisting, subject to such resourceful pumping of its oil, mining of its minerals, stripping of its forests, and fishing of its seas as to amount to a Reality that is no match for the social realities we’ve constructed from it.

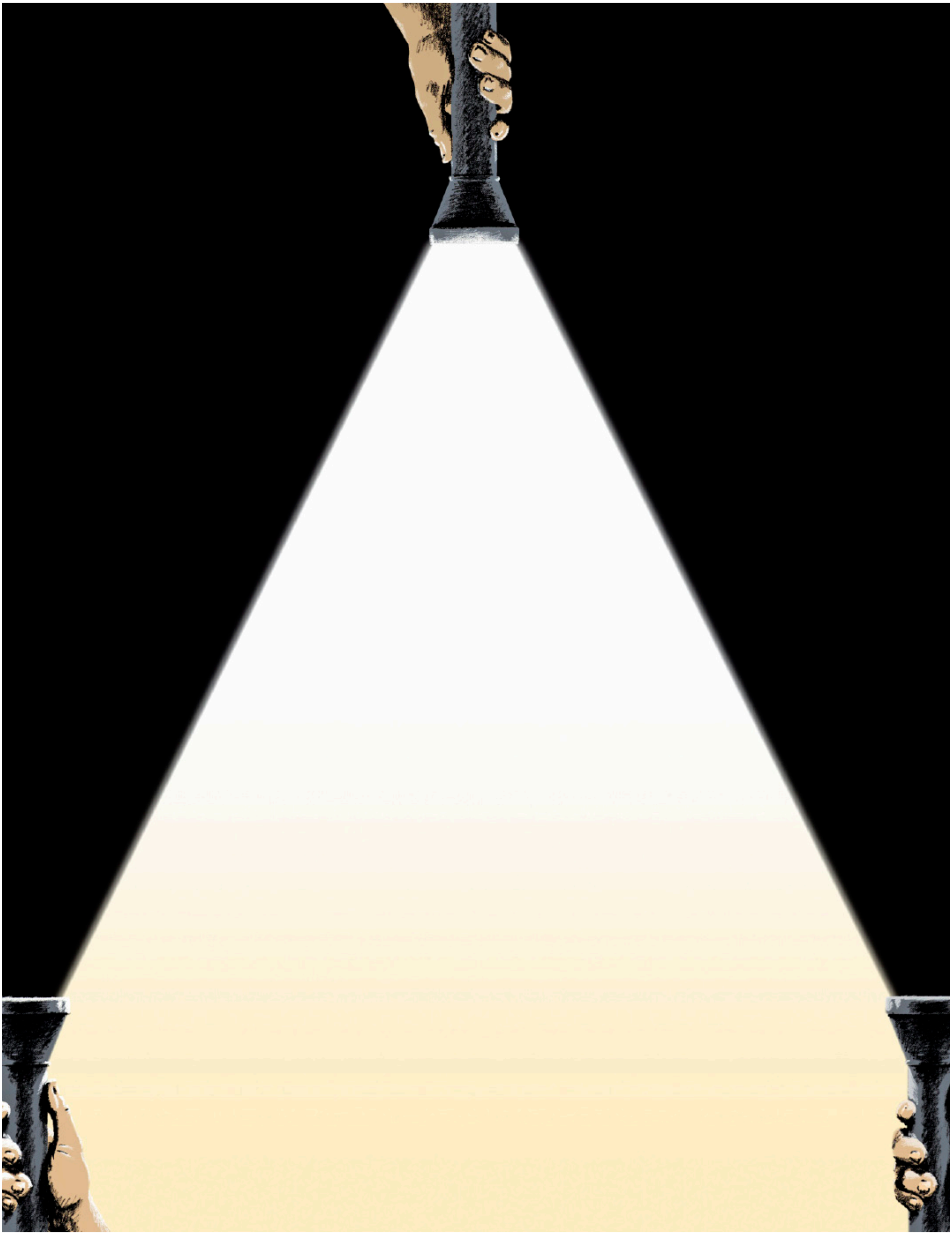
Joseph Conrad, in his novel *Lord Jim*, says of a minor character that he could not survive except within a well-developed civilization. No author sneers at his own characters as royally as Conrad, but in fact that dependence describes most of us. And why not, since civilizations are what the species has been designing for itself in its great epochal struggles to endure. In a favorable light, human history may be seen as the colossally effective enterprise of converting some of the brute facts of Reality into realities on which we can survive. Until now, as a geologically clocked obsessiveness, it has been, with the expansive genius of *Homo sapiens*, an immeasurable mythic wresting of life from its inhospitality. And the vast unknowable world we inhabit would seem to be represented in our imaginations only by the occasional mountain lion overturning a garbage can in the suburbs.

3.

Yet we have learned, with the knowledge that has made human beings conquistadors of the earth, that such executive success for so long brings with it—what to call it?—a cosmological arrogance. That arrogance, most compactly described, is the anthropic principle. It states that the exploding universe was formed fortuitously of such a specific chemical stew as to make the appearance of human life on the earth inevitable. Never mind the billions of years of gaseous storms, the firing up of photons and the slow whirling of constellations—according to the anthropic principle, it looks suspiciously as if we are the point of it all. And so, despite its hypothetical tone—there is said to be both a weak and a strong principle—we can hear in it a quasi-religious self-congratulation, another reading perhaps of Genesis, wherein the culmination of God’s great work comes on the sixth day with the supreme creation of the Bible writers themselves.

4.

If there is a consensus among scientists that the Reality independent of our representations of it is changing its nature, there is everywhere a resistance to the idea. To someone living in a great city, where the natural world is represented by a park with benches, life is made from the sum of social realities. If you go to work in an office building and are occupied with the pressures of the job, the competitive business institution, your mind is so busy and the circumstances of survival so personal that there is no time for the thought of a venge-



MIRKO ILIĆ

ful Reality. Or if you are the single parent providing your children with their breakfast cereal. Or if you are at war, lying in the sand with your rifle at the ready, these climatic circumstances demand of you a vocabulary too exotic to be seriously part of the thinking of someone inured to a private, if not to a powerless, life.

To others, the so-called crisis of climate change is no more than the usual daily business of the planet—icebergs calving, songbirds going silent, obscure species of frogs dying in their ponds. Those who calmly hold to this view choose to believe nothing at all is happening that is inconsistent with normal changes in biological diversification—the thriving of some creatures, the dying out of others—or, regarding variations in the weather, what we have always known to be the hurricane season on this continent, the monsoons over there. Though, of course, they choose not to know of the climatic biomes, or to believe that climate and weather are two entirely different things. People have settled the earth where the climate made farming possible, or because desert sands were livable, or because prevalent tropical temperatures made life easy. The habitation of the earth, and growth of cultures, reflect age-old patterns of human distribution. This—the prevalence of sustaining lifelong climatic regions, not frogs in a pond—is what is changing.

If anyone were to walk the streets with a sign saying The End Is Near, I would expect it to be someone with a PhD in physics.

And then there are those who not only reject the idea of a global climate crisis but do so with scorn or suspicion, finding in the scientific consensus nothing less than a conspiracy. Though why a scientific conspiracy should exist, or to what purpose, is never made clear. But it is politicians, officeholders of the right, who broadcast this paranoia.

Finally, there are the corporate leaders in the energy industries—the coal operators, the oil producers—who would prevent any regulation of carbon emissions or other modifications of their business practices. As the presumptive beneficiaries of the human colonization of Earth, they are afflicted with the latent conceit of triumphalism, in which social reality is Reality, the two are merged, and there is no distinguishing them.

5.

But there is a dynamic here that is nothing new. When Galileo reported his telescopically informed conclusion that Copernicus was right—it was the earth that moved around the sun—he was tried for heresy by the Inquisition. He recanted, though he did not entirely avert punishment, spending the rest of his life under house arrest. He had discovered a brute fact that contradicted the prevalent social reality of church teaching, that the sun moved around the earth—social realities being even to this day as much a matter of the political manipulation of fantasy as of inventions such as the cellphone. It was only in 1992 that the Catholic Church admitted that Galileo might be right. While we no longer accuse scientists of heresy, there is a residual suspicion of the subversive capacity of science, with its famous "method," to overturn the comfortable social realities that people find to their advantage. The high clergy of the Middle Ages were beneficiaries of the religious domination of society: they ate quite well and dressed in finery. It seems apparent that today, too, those who abjure the ineluctable Reality of global warming are the conservatives among us, the same Republicans who themselves live quite well and do not like universal healthcare, or raises in the minimum wage, or any government oversight of investment banks. If they are not all malefactors of great wealth, they tend to include those of the corporate executive culture who can't abide any interest, even humankind's, that is not in their corporation's interest. And if the class of citizen-deniers includes Tea Party exegetes not themselves in the economic upper percentiles, we can't condemn them, so pathetically misinformed are they in the face of a looming planetary crisis.

It is true that people in other countries want what we have, and so they cut down trees, and poach, and cook with coal fire, in that great quest for "me" that is the mark of our species. But I speak of the American situation. There is a preoccupation here with "Holy Scripture" that is dogged, hates Darwin, and insists on the literal and sacred truth of primitive documents thousands of years old. About this, nothing can be done.

6.

But someone must bear the responsibility for this widespread national resistance, someone with propa-

POETRY ARCHIVE

December 6, 1952

The Plain Sense of Things

Wallace Stevens

**After the leaves have fallen, we return
To a plain sense of things. It is as if
We had come to an end of the imagination,
Inanimate in an inert savoir.**

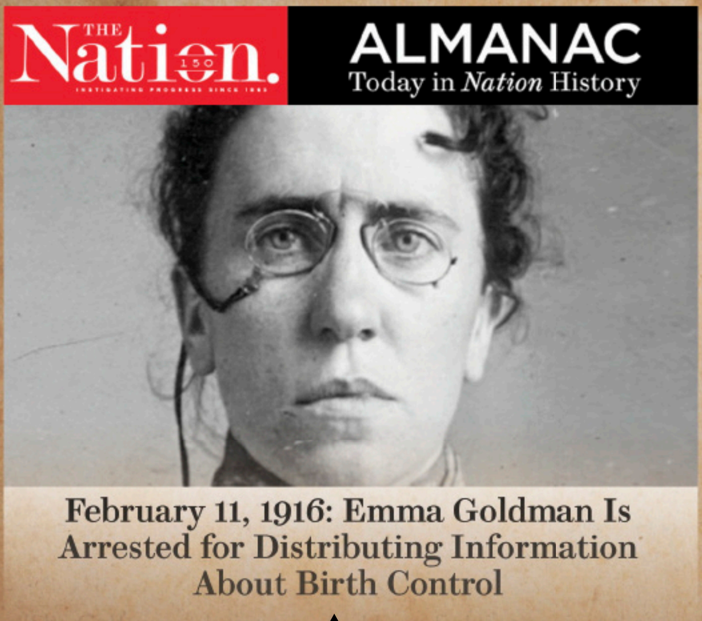
**It is difficult even to choose the adjective
For this blank cold, this sadness without cause.
The great structure has become a minor house.
No turban walks across the lessened floors.**

**The greenhouse never so badly needed paint.
The chimney is fifty years old and slants to one side.
A fantastic effort has failed, a repetition
In a repetitiousness of men and flies.**

**Yet the absence of the imagination had
Itself to be imagined. The great pond,
The plain sense of it, without reflections, leaves,
Mud, water like dirty glass, expressing silence**

**Of a sort, silence of a rat come out to see,
The great pond and its waste of the lilies, all this
Had to be imagined as an inevitable knowledge,
Required, as a necessity requires.**

[THENATION.COM/ALMANAC]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ALMANAC
Today in *Nation* History

February 11, 1916: Emma Goldman Is Arrested for Distributing Information About Birth Control

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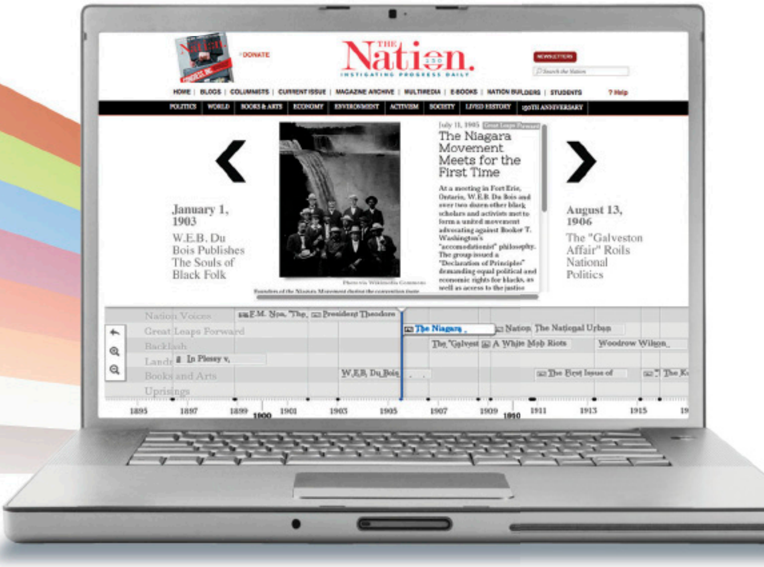
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January 1, 1903
W.E.B. Du Bois Publishes The Souls of Black Folk

July 11, 1905

The Niagara Movement Meets for the First Time

At a meeting in Fort Erie, Ontario, W.E.B. Du Bois and over two dozen other black scholars and activists met to form a united movement advocating against Booker T. Washington's "accomodationist" philosophy. The group issued a "Declaration of Principles" demanding equal political and economic rights for blacks, as well as access to the justice

August 13, 1906
The "Galveston Affair" Roils National Politics

[THENATION.COM/IDEALS]

gandistic resources, someone richer than most and so in a position to negate, deny, and hold up to scorn any reasonable scientific explanation of what is happening to our planet.

In this country, we cede to the plutocrats. I would choose the Koch brothers as likely villains, those malefactors of great wealth, except that their malefaction is only incidental to the problem. Their sin, as influential men of wealth hiding their own brutal interests behind a libertarian facade, is worse than that.

Look at it this way: as Americans, we pride ourselves on getting things done, as people knowing what to do and when to do it—this is as basic an American identity as there is. From Ben Franklin on up through the Franklin Roosevelt of the Second World War, we have been archetypally more than given to solve any task, secure any dream. Therefore, the Koch brothers' failure is only incidental to their wealth. Theirs is the sin of what can hardly be imagined as a factor of power: it is maladaptive failure, the failure to understand the realities and do something about them. The Kochs have lost that; they are staggering about in the woods with no idea what to do beyond preserving their fiefdom. We need not go into the reasons for this failure—psychological, emotional, structural—the cost to us is too great.

7.

At this stage of the climatic problem, it is not the priests, rabbis or ministers among us who are saying that "pride goeth before the Fall"; it is the scientists. That interests me—this turn to religious moralizing on the part of the secular community. It may represent an enormous cultural shift, a kind of re-establishment of a new liturgical authority. Because it is an undeniable worship of the earth that would ask us to save it. If anyone were to walk the streets with a sign saying The End Is Near, I would expect it to be someone with a PhD in physics. This would explain the public aversion of some to the idea of science: that its practitioners speak, however technically, as prophets—a prophet, of course, being someone to be ignored.

It may be with some resentment that we feel, after all that has been done to the earth in many thousands of years, that it should fall to us, to our generations, to pay the price. Yet it was only the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century that sped us into recognizably modern times. Wordsworth wrote in the early 1800s: "The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: / Little we see in Nature that is ours…."

For those who do imagine a catastrophe of astronomical magnitude, our imagination is limited. What do movies know? We may see cities in smoking ruins. With winds which we have never known for their iciness, and waters for their heaving, thunderous rages, and morning suns burning our lands to cinders, and all of it happening consistent with each of our maniacally trashed biomes. Perhaps then we will see wars for potable water, tillable land. And who will be left after the plagues but some lonely stragglers looking for community—and finding no other humans but hideous creatures of natural selection who have sprouted energetically in this new, unrecognizable Reality.

But there is no telling what will be. The planet going through its agonies may end up quietly enough—just not the home we thought it was. It is a few seers in our time who remind us that, for all our intrepid world-making social realities, we are dealing with something inexplicable: Reality is still there, as mysterious as ever. Einstein tells us that scientific knowledge is like a searchlight whose expanding beam brings more and more of what was once dark into the light—but as it does, so does the circumference of darkness expand. **150th**

Productive Democracy

Why we need a new egalitarian politics—and why social democracy will never get us there.

JOEL ROGERS

For progressives committed to reasoned debate about public ends—competent democratic government, peace and broadly shared prosperity, an environment that will allow human flourishing in future generations—these are dark times.

In international affairs, when one considers the medieval sectarian religious violence of ISIS (but with modern weapons!); the rising income and political inequality to be found nearly everywhere; our abject failure to arrest species-extinguishing carbon emissions; the private-investor coup of the Trans-Pacific Partnership; a revived Cold War with Russia; and unending air wars on Islamic terrorists that chiefly fuel their recruitment base, there is little trace of an effective progressive presence—or sometimes even sanity.

And in national politics, especially in the rich countries of North America and Europe, things seem even worse. There, for a long generation after World War II, social democracy and its Keynesian welfare state secured an uneasy but productive peace between capitalism and democracy. But that peace is no more. The chief reason is that the world it worked in—national economies still relatively insulated from international competitive pressure, led by a limited number of large, functionally centralized and vertically integrated firms, organizing work in stable systems of hierarchical control—is also no more. It's been replaced by one of much more internationalized and digitalized production, by changing constellations of functionally decentralized and vertically disintegrated firms, drawing from a global labor force that includes billions of workers paid a tiny fraction of what their rich-country counterparts make.

This new world has disrupted labor movements across the globe and eliminated any trace of the home-country loyalty previously displayed by big business. But its greatest casualty has been public confidence in liberal democracy itself. At no time in the past century has that been lower than today.

You can't blame the public for this. Politics has truly failed them. For more than a generation now, virtually every important elected leader has told the same story: "Capital is free to move anywhere. Any tax or regulation we impose on it will be cost, and any cost a spur to its movement elsewhere, which will hurt us all. So while we feel your pain, you must understand that our ability to regulate or tax capital is gone. Get used to it." That this story ignores some crucial facts—the real-world "stickiness" of much investment; the self-

The Nation's *Most Notable Contributors*

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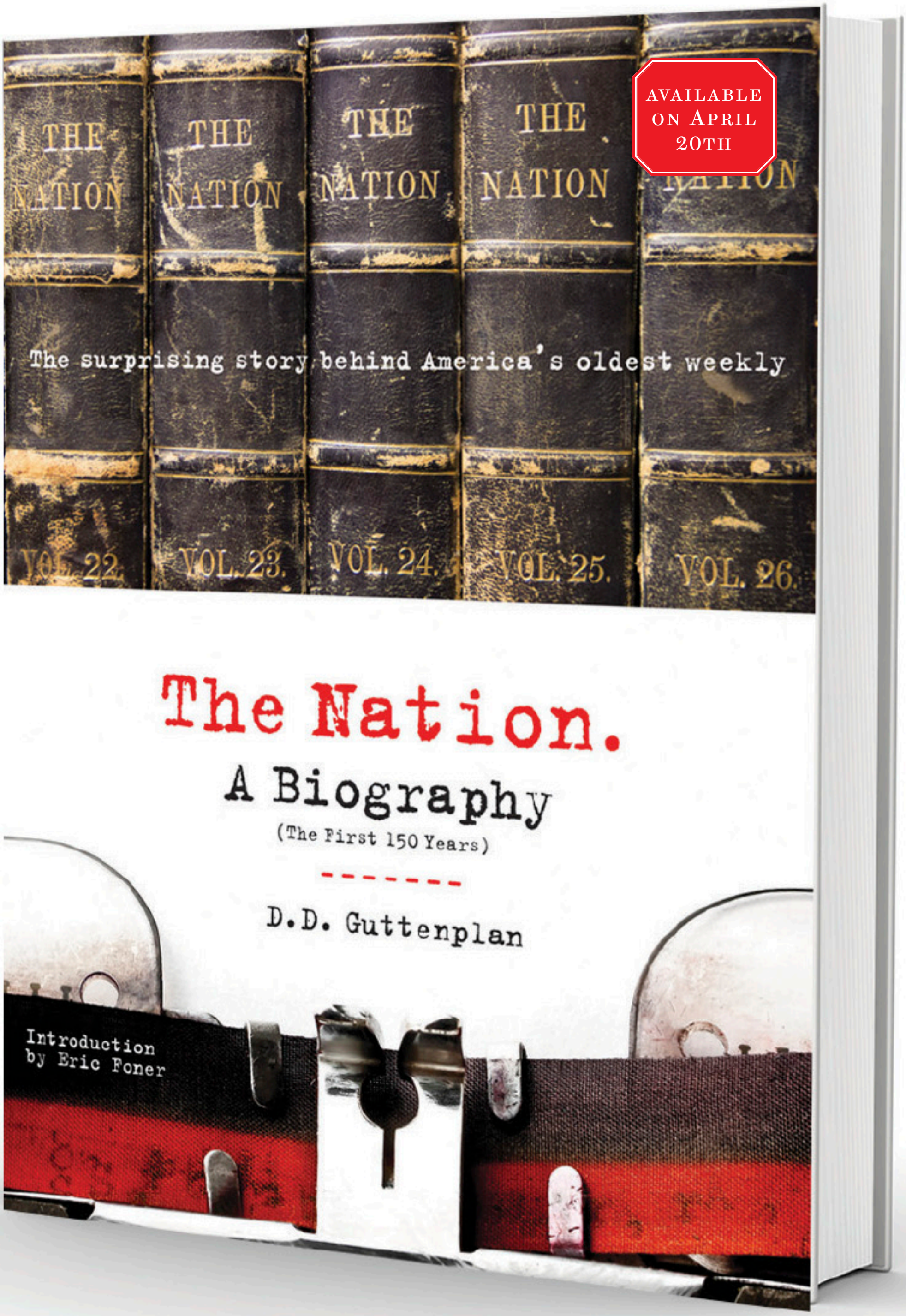
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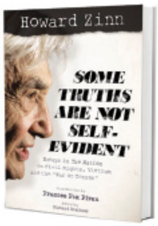
ERIC ALTERMAN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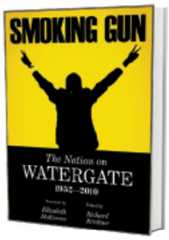
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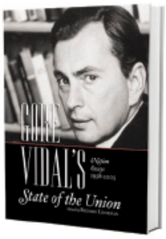
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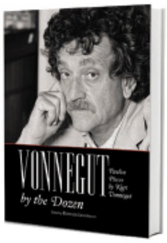
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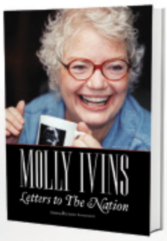
MOLLY IVINS Letters to The Nation

THE Nation. 150

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supply of most economies; the dependence of the service sector, which supplies most of the jobs requiring immobile labor; the power of government purchasing to shape private markets; and the obvious fact that many taxes pay for things that capital sorely needs—doesn't stop its devout repetition. Nor did financial capital's crashing the world system in 2008.

Looking at this sorry history, many have concluded that these times mark not just the end of social democracy, but any plausible egalitarian-democratic project. I think that's wrong. Traditional social democracy, with big labor, big business and big government bargaining over management of the economy and society, is indeed near death and probably can't be revived. And I don't think we should try. Even in its heyday, social democracy was too centralized and top-down in its administration, too socially exclusionist, and too narrowly concerned with class—and it still is.

However, an alternative egalitarian and democratic project—one more suited to today's economy and sensibilities and more uplifting of real freedom and human possibility—is available to us. It offers a natural and very large base, demonstrated proof of effectiveness for most of its policy ingredients, and even furtive properties of "emergence." What it lacks is not plausibility, but rather its clear articulation as a distinct project in public discussion, party politics and democratic movement-building.

Call this project what you will; I call it "productive democracy." I'll give reasons later for my optimism about PD's chances. But first I'll describe its motivation, ambitions and essential elements, as well as how they cohere into a viable political order. I make no suggestion on the strategy to achieve PD (something we can all discuss later if there's interest). This is about the land on the other side of the Jordan, not the rowboat across.

After World War II, the Keynesian welfare state secured an uneasy but productive peace between capitalism and democracy. That peace is no more.

We usually think of democracy as a source of inclusive representation and distributive fairness, which it surely is. But it is also a source of problem-solving, invention and thus wealth generation—a source of value, not just values. After forty years of the corporate-sponsored defamation of democracy as whining parasitism or incompetence, and of democratic government as mere "waste, fraud and abuse," it's imperative that progressives show the ability of both to actually work, to be useful, in everyday life. Call this demonstration of usefulness democracy's "survival criterion."

Doing so is one central aim of productive democracy—and the source of "productive" in its name. Because, along with seeking economic security and opportunity for all, PD would highlight the centrality of fostering both social learning and productivity—understood not just as output per unit of input, but as value per unit of input (and where "natural capital," *aka* the environment, is included in that calculation)—in achieving more ambitious egalitarian ends. It would place a bigger and more visible bet than social democrats ever did on a well-ordered democracy's ability to help citizens create social wealth—and solve social problems. Its signature politics would be efforts to develop and harness that contribution. Indeed, it would define the "general welfare" not just as physical and economic security and reasonably equal opportunity and life chances, but as the capacity and interest of all citizens to make such contributions, to be actively engaged in building their own society.

But so much for ambitions—let's go to the essential elements. These are summarized in the sidebar "Three Public Philosophies," which aims to clarify PD's policy, governing, and broad "constitutional political economy" by contrasting its approach with those of neoliberalism and traditional social democracy.

Considering, first, *policy*: in the realm of economic policy, PD would continue to use the traditional Keynesian tools of macroeconomic steering to maintain "effective demand" and keep the economy near its full potential. But it would commit as well to effective supply of the "productive infrastructure" needed to support the economy we actually want, not just the one we have. By this I mean a suite of policies, public goods, and institutions that together work to raise performance standards for firms and communities, enable both to meet them, and capture and share the resulting increased wealth.

This infrastructure is intrinsically local. The relevant "location" can and sometimes would be the whole nation. But it may be easier to imagine it in terms of metropolitan areas (cities and their surrounding suburbs and commuting sheds), the densely populated and geographically compact engines of wealth in all national economies. (In the United States, for example, on just 12 percent of our land area, the top 100 metropolitan regions house two-thirds of our total population and produce more than three-quarters of our annual GDP.)

Already adopted in many cities (but nowhere near all), typical *policies* include things like standards on job quality, training, career pathways and a living wage at area firms; requirements for reduced waste (eventually zero); and broad encouragement of worker organization and ownership. Typical *public goods*, with their positive effects in lowering living costs, increasing sustainability and improving the local quality of life, are things like public transportation, education, recreational facilities and public space. Typical

TESTIMONIALS

RALPH NADER

Early in 1959, I dropped by Carey McWilliams's office to give him my article "The *Safe* Car You Can't Buy," reprinted elsewhere in this issue. *The Nation*'s publication of it was only one example of that venerable editor's sense of what was newsworthy, in contrast to his advertisement-indentured peers in the mainstream press. McWilliams's office was regularly piled high with newspapers from all over the country. He scanned them and ripped out interesting items that could become articles or material for his editorials in *The Nation*. Those editorials awed his peers: they were fresh, cogent, courageous and beautifully written. His workload and output were prodigious. McWilliams put out, with very few assistants, a weekly edition of *The Nation* during some very lonely, bigoted and redbaiting times. It wasn't for him to give up discovering young (or older) writers, or to settle for the "least worst" of the political parties or candidates. Long before Jimmy Carter used the phrase, he was driven by the question "Why not the best?" On *The Nation*'s 150th anniversary, let us remember Carey McWilliams and learn from his exemplary stewardship of this magazine for so many tumultuous years. I and many others owe him much for his editorial genius and for the forces of change that he helped put into motion.

Three Public Philosophies

	NEOLIBERALISM	SOCIAL DEMOCRACY	PRODUCTIVE DEMOCRACY
Economic Strategy	Inequality/incentives	Effective demand	Effective supply *(productive infrastructure)*
Redistributive Peak	None	Late	Early
Asset Ownership	Narrow	Narrow	Wide *(private firms and public commons)*
Income Security	None	Employment, insurance *(E&I)*	Firm and social dividends, basic income
Revenue	Regressive/flat taxes on private income/profits	Progressive taxes on private income/profits	Progressive taxes on consumption, "public bads" and non-reinvested profits
International Economic Strategy & Relations	Forced integration	Strategic protectionism	Balanced trade, managed diversity, unitary taxation, curbed speculation, nonmilitary global public goods
Privileged Branch	Judiciary	Executive	Legislature and problem-solving public
Public Administration	Privatization	Delegation/rule-bound bureaucratic discretion	Democratic experimentalism/ deliberative problem-solving
Social Contribution	Demanded/not enabled	Enabled/not demanded	Strongly encouraged and enabled

institutions are things like regional partnerships (among firm owners, workers and communities) for joint training, credentialing, modernization and marketing efforts; public financing and technical-assistance services to enable meeting higher environmental and other standards; and facilities for planning and citizen engagement and review.

WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT providing such productive infrastructure has two salient effects. It increases productivity and wealth in those locations, thereby attracting more private investment. And it grounds that investment (makes it "stickier"), which reduces the frequency and credibility of capital threats to leave town—or the country. This reopens space for social bargaining, even under murderously competitive international conditions.

Productive democracy would also argue for increasing the relative share of total "welfare" investment made early in life (everything from early-pregnancy care to perinatal and visiting-nurse assistance to whatever else is needed, up to adulthood, by way of health, education, counseling or other support). While this may be expensive, producing capable and confident adults is still much cheaper than repairing broken ones, and PD's commitment to equality means preparing all citizens to participate and make a contribution to society. For similar reasons, it would also supplement employment income with a basic income guarantee for all (as most of Latin America does now, and Switzerland and other European countries are seriously considering). And it would vastly widen worker-citizen ownership, both of private firms and society's "commons." The latter includes both our natural commons (air, land, water, flora and fauna) and our created one, especially those parts of special benefit to business (e.g., physical infrastructure, intellectual property and business law, central banking). As many have argued, both of these commons should be "monetized," with beneficiaries charged a user fee, which would be distributed, in whole or in part, to all citizens on an equal per-capita basis. Alaska and Norway have long done this with their oil holdings, and California is now doing something similar with the money paid for carbon permits. But we could—and should—do more.

Traditional social democracy is indeed near death and probably can't be revived. And I don't think we should try.

For revenue, PD would make greater use of progressive consumption taxes (for example, with no tax paid up to some reasonable level of consumption, then a sharply progressive rate afterward) and taxes on "public bads" (including pollution, environmental degradation and other socially destructive behaviors). It might also favor steeply progressive taxes on non-reinvested corporate profits. All these means of raising revenue would directly contribute to equity, efficiency and sustainability—even before the money from them is spent.

In international affairs, any PD nation would break sharply with the tenets and practices of neoliberalism. It would unapologetically declare its national interest in "fair trade"—i.e., trade that benefits every party with a stake in the transaction—and in controlling its own development strategy (while respecting the like interests of other nations); and it would seek to manage, not obliterate, the resulting diversity. It would also work to limit wasteful speculation (e.g., through a financial-transaction tax), effectively criminalize tax-free havens, and eliminate tax arbitrage through some "unitary taxation" scheme (where, by agreed-upon formulas, a country's taxes on multinationals would be apportioned according to the location of each corporation's production, employment, value added and sales). And it would do its fair share (as measured by each country's percentage of world product) to underwrite needed global public goods—in health, development, climate, security and peace. (The last two imply, for the United States, dismantling much of our military empire and permanent war machine.)

Productive democracy would move government more squarely back into the business of public debate and deliberation. Its "privileged" unit of government would not be those private-property guardians so favored by neoliberals—the judiciary. Nor would it be the executive-centered administrative state favored by social democrats. Rather, it would be the "people's house," the legislature—and the organized public itself. In PD's version of progressive federalism, the national government would establish and fund a set of core commitments to all citizens; state and regional governments would be free to experiment (or not) above that. Preserving its commitment to the affirmative state—the belief that solving problems is the government's job—PD would promote experimentation and deliberative problem-solving, often involving citizens, in achieving legislatively declared goals. It would ensure and measure accountability by the actual progress toward such declared goals, not by monitoring the observance of often meaningless bureaucratic rules.

In sum, PD offers a more open, decentralized, locally rooted, efficient, egalitarian democracy, supported by leaner and more flexible government(s), as joined by a more capable public. Its policies and institutions cohere and mutually support one other in driving up social learning and productivity, visibly benefiting citizens via a better democratic order. It both satisfies democracy's "survival criterion" and reopens its future. It may not be nirvana, but it's not too shabby.

Why am I optimistic about productive democracy's political chances? For starters, I think it would be very popular with ordinary citizens, including many now quite hostile to the current affirmative state. Nobody likes stupid bureaucracy. Wider citizen-worker ownership has cross-partisan appeal. Taxes on consumption and "public bads" are more popular than those on income. PD's basic values—freedom, opportunity, active citizenship, fairness—are nearly universal. Indeed, the only real opponents I see are the hideously selfish and unpatriotic corporate elites and the many public officials who serve them. Those are exactly the opponents progressives should want.

I also think that both the supply and the demand conditions for the sorts of democratic collective action that PD calls for are increasingly favorable.

On the supply side, technology, of course, can help. Our abilities to confer across distances, and to coordinate, monitor and precisely measure the performance of virtually any inanimate thing, are light-years better and cheaper than they were a generation ago. But more concretely, we are already acquiring the sorts of skills and experience that PD demands. Millions of workers participate daily in multidisciplinary problem-solving teams. Many governments are already breaking down bureaucratic silos, experimenting and measuring progress in policy, and inviting the public to help. New forms of direct citizen engagement in policy are sprouting up all over. The "share" economy of peer-to-peer production and a collaborative commons is exploding. What PD imagines is in the adjacent possible, not the remote.

For most people, the choice between degradation and freedom is an easy one.

On the demand side, most of the world is moving to cities, so there's a real need to get those better organized. Climate change is upon us and will require vast amounts of investment and action not possibly supplied by markets. Yet making our cities safer and greener, as well as more just and more resilient, can't be engineered from any central capital. Both require the local knowledge and commitment of the people actually living there.

Finally (and this goes to the question of "base"), nothing I've argued for here is remote from humanity's evident desire. All around the world—a world in which the United States has far less limiting power than in the recent past—billions of people are repelled by the effects of predatory capitalism and would grab at a plausible democratic alternative. For most people, the choice between further degradation and a plausible route to greater security and freedom is an easy one. I think productive democracy offers people that choice. Progressives should put it before them. **150th**

We Built This City

US municipalities are witnessing a rebirth of socialist ideals, but the movement needs broad support to thrive.

KSHAMA SAWANT

As the sun set on the Occupy Seattle encampment in December 2011, the question "What next?" hung in the air, as it did over Zuccotti Park in New York City. The tents were gone, our spirits were dampened, but an awakened sense of empowerment prevailed.

The movement had given voice to a widespread fury at big business and a recognition of the gaping class divide. Key to Occupy's success were the thousands of young people who had helped elect President Obama and had completed their own first steps toward achieving the American Dream, only to see their college degrees translate into crushing student debt and poverty wages.

Inside and outside the encampments, discussions about the moral bankruptcy of Wall Street began to evolve into questions about the viability of capitalism itself. A revived search for an alternative had begun.

Socialism has been declared dead many times. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing collapse of the "communist" regimes in Eastern Europe, the global capitalist elite launched an unprecedented ideological offensive. The obituary was written not only for socialism, but for the basic ideas of collective struggle by the working class.

Now, after three decades of virtually untrammeled neoliberal policies, with class questions again brought to the fore by unprecedented levels of inequality, we have been witnessing a renewed interest in socialist ideas. Half of the young Americans surveyed between the ages of 18 and 29 viewed socialism positively, according to a Pew Research Center poll in December 2011.

The winter of Occupy sparked a debate in my own organization, Socialist Alternative. Looking ahead to the 2012 presidential-election year and the

McDonald's
VOTE KSHAMA SAWANT
$15/hour MINIMUM WAGE

ELAINE THOMPSON / AP

inevitable pull of corporate politics, Socialist Alternative called for independent candidates representing the 99 percent to run across the country.

Here in Seattle, I filed in a race for the Washington State House as a socialist "Occupy" candidate. The Democratic Party establishment has virtual monopoly control over Seattle politics, as it does in most urban centers. The city has increasingly become a playground for the wealthy, with the nation's fastest-rising rents and a rapidly gentrifying urban core. My campaign was a referendum on corporate, neoliberal politics: I flatly rejected cuts to education, mass transit and social services, while calling for taxes on the rich and a $15 minimum wage.

After receiving one of the highest votes for a socialist candidate in decades, I ran in 2013 for the Seattle City Council. Once again, my campaign made bold anticorporate demands—for rent control, a "millionaires' tax" to fully fund social services, and a citywide $15 minimum wage. Running independently as a Socialist Alternative candidate helped me tap into voters' anger at the status quo of corporate politics. In Seattle, the council members pay themselves $120,000 a year, the second-highest council salary among the nation's forty largest cities. I accepted no corporate donations and pledged to take only the average Seattle worker's wage of $40,000. I also promised to use the rest of my salary to help build social movements.

The left will have to build outside the Democratic Party, whose leaders have shown that they will go to any lengths to defend the superwealthy.

The campaign attracted more than 400 volunteers, mobilized support in the labor movement, established a foothold among left-wing Democratic Party activists, won the strong endorsement of the city's largest alternative newspaper (*The Stranger*), and developed an unstoppable momentum for action on the minimum wage. None of this would have been possible had I been aligned with corporate interests. All the other candidates in the city elections—most of them Democratic Party members—scrupulously avoided the issues raised in my campaign. As a testament to the power of grassroots movements, however, most politicians were forced to respond in the election's final weeks, professing tepid support for the increasingly popular call to raise the minimum wage.

This time I won the election, receiving nearly 95,000 votes to defeat an entrenched sixteen-year incumbent. The Seattle City Council now has nine members: eight Democrats and one socialist.

THE PROSPECTS FOR CREATing a majority coalition on any of the issues raised in my campaign would be nonexistent without massively mobilizing people outside the council chambers. Yet holding even that single seat in city government has provided an indispensable platform when it comes to winning real gains for ordinary people.

A few weeks after my election, Socialist Alternative and I launched 15 Now, the grassroots campaign that worked with the Seattle labor movement to build support for a $15 minimum wage. Last April, after three months of intense campaigning and movement-building with a citywide network of neighborhood groups, 15 Now filed a "charter amendment." Business leaders, fearing that the ballot measure could end up being passed as a voter referendum in November, decided to limit their losses by crafting a weaker $15-per-hour ordinance—and then fought to undercut that with loopholes.

The loopholes (including a longer phase-in period, a tip credit, and subminimum wages for teens and persons with disabilities) reflected the strength of the corporate counteroffensive to our movement's efforts and the complicity of the Democratic Party. But the final result will be a $3 billion transfer of wealth over ten years from corporations to Seattle's 100,000 lowest-paid workers.

This same process, with the relative strength of movements measured against that of big business, played out on issue after issue in my first year on the council. We organized a "People's Budget" coalition and won increased funding for social services, including year-round homeless shelters for women and basic services for homeless encampments. We also won $1.6 million in raises for low-paid city workers and strengthened the enforcement of labor laws. We fought alongside tenants and community organizations to defeat an Orwellian attack on low-income housing called "Stepping Forward," forcing the Seattle Housing Authority to back off from plans to begin 400 percent increases on rental rates over five years. Organizing with indigenous activists, we established Indigenous People's Day (on the day celebrated federally as Columbus Day), putting a spotlight on the brutality and genocide unleashed under colonialism, and on the need to fight against the continued poverty and marginalization of indigenous communities. We have also helped publicize and support campaigns against regressive taxation, rising rents, climate change and the school-to-prison pipeline.

All of these gains are only a taste of the fundamental change we need. While successfully defending low-income housing was a victory, we must also build thousands more units. While raising funds for social services is a real step forward, we must also raise tens of millions more just to address critical needs. Genuine socialism means planning the entire society and economy on a rational, democratic and sustainable basis—delivering a high standard of living to all while protecting the environment.

Any attempt to develop socialist municipal policies will inevitably come up against resource and technological constraints, as well as political attacks from outside the locality. This can even be seen in the fight for the $15 minimum wage, when Seattle's victory was immediately threatened by potential statewide initiatives aimed at outlawing local minimum-wage laws. Socialists can overcome these challenges by drawing strength from the interdependence of working people nationally and internationally.

The American left will have to build outside the Republican and Democratic parties, whose leaders have repeatedly demonstrated that they will go to any lengths to defend the superwealthy and protect the capitalist system. Progress can happen only by building independent working-class power.

This year will see continued struggles against economic inequality, racial and gender oppression, police brutality and climate change. As we confront these challenges, I hope that my experience in office can serve as a useful example of socialist politics in action, with practical relevance for rebuilding the American workers' movement.

Our victories will depend on whether the left champions the interests of working people and the downtrodden—and does so no matter how much this comes into conflict with what is acceptable to the ruling elite or compatible with capitalism.

That is the essence of a socialist approach to politics.

150th

An Investigative Blueprint

American journalism has lost its crusader instinct. Here's how to get it back.

MICHAEL MASSING

It's an age-old debate among journalists: which approach to covering the news is superior—the American, with its striving after objectivity and balance, or the European, with its frank embrace of slant and party? Should news organizations seek out all sides of an issue, or should they present the news with an unabashed tilt? By now, it seems clear that the Americans (at their best) have the edge. Newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*, for all their shortcomings, offer a rich daily diet of news, from distant wars to local schools; analysis of events and trends; coverage of arts and culture; and opinion from both in-house columnists and outside contributors. Another top paper, the *Financial Times*, though based in London, follows an American-style approach. The European model has its own impressive exemplars, notably *The Guardian*, but overall the American way has, I think, shown its superiority.

Yet in the American quest for balance, something critical has been lost: the crusader instinct. I don't mean crusades of the lurid "Remember the *Maine*" type waged by the yellow rags of yore (or, sometimes, the screaming tabloids of today). Rather, I'm referring to the sustained coverage of key issues with a passion and tenacity that can help mobilize the masses and bring about lasting change.

Today, most investigative projects at American news organizations are limited in scope, episodic in nature and aimed at specific rather than systemic abuses. A good example is "Invisible Child," the December 2013 *New York Times* series describing a year in the life of Dasani, a homeless girl in Brooklyn. Totaling more than 28,000 words and appearing over five consecutive days, the series was the largest investigative project ever run by the paper at one time. The reporter, Andrea Elliott, eloquently captured the travails of Dasani's daily life and the terrible conditions that she and her family had to endure at the decrepit shelter in which they lived. The series landed with a bang: it set loose a flood of comments, a flow of contributions to the family, and squawks from City Hall that its policies were being misrepresented. The City Council held hearings on the quality of services for New York's homeless, and eventually more than 400 children were removed from two substandard shelters.

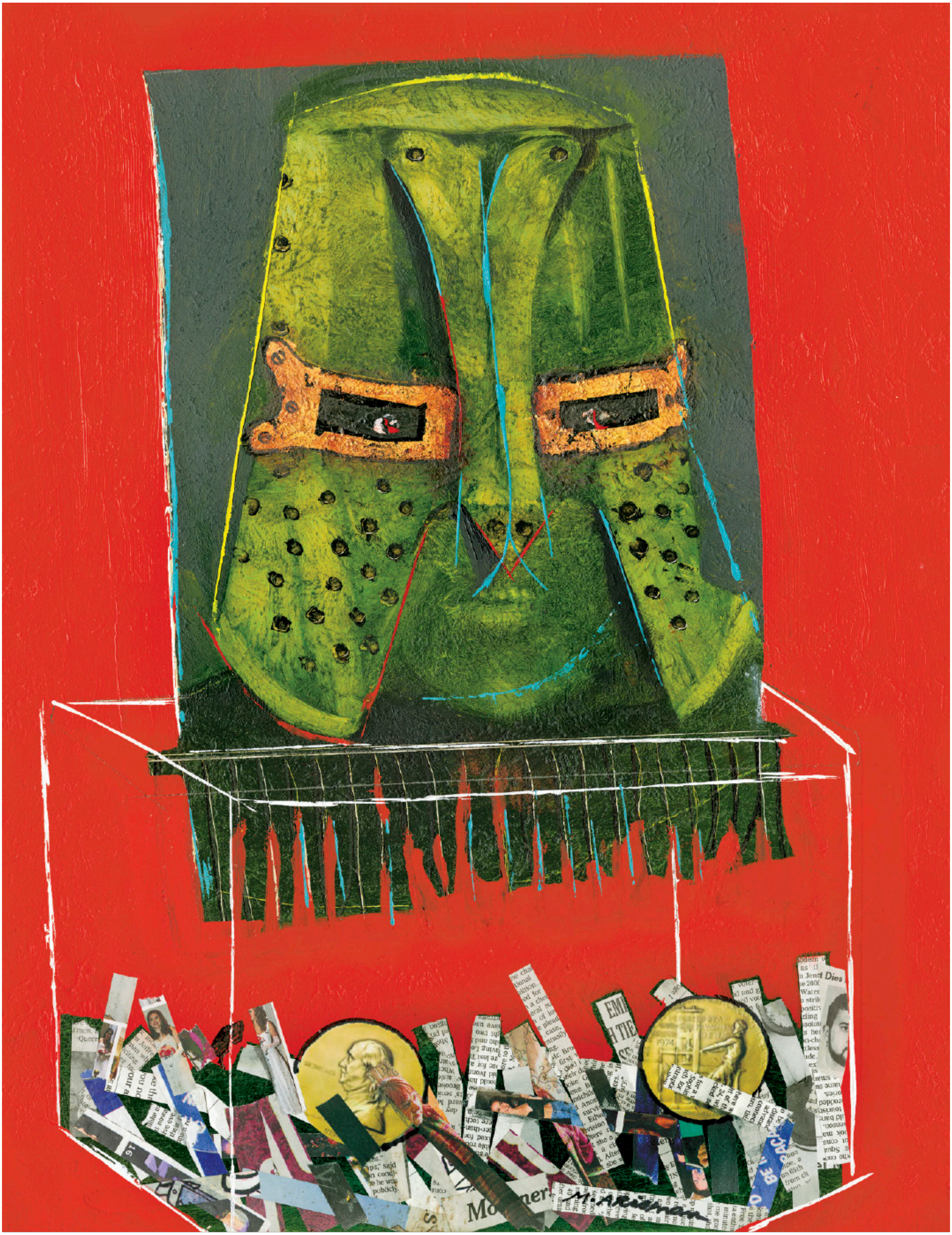
TESTIMONIALS

DAN RATHER

For 150 years, *The Nation* has provided consistently uncompromising and important journalism and, in so doing, has made itself a vital, influential voice in the American discussion.

It's worth the subscription price for its deep-digging investigative reports alone, but there's so much more: thoughtful coverage and analysis of international affairs, domestic policy and elective politics, plus opinion pieces and commentaries that regularly touch off new sunbursts of thought, whether you agree with them or not.

But the series caused some grumbling as well. Exploring it, Bill Grueskin, then a dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, sent a query to about fifty journalists, lawyers, professors and students, asking for their impressions. He got many



MARSHALL ARISMAN

complaints, which he summarized for the *Columbia Journalism Review*: the series was too long; it failed to acknowledge the effects of the paper's own reporting on the family's fortunes; it focused too relentlessly on narrative, at the expense of analyzing the policies and politics that feed the persistence of homelessness in New York. Finally, there were reservations about the "single story" approach, in which a complex issue is told through the experiences of one subject.

In the ensuing weeks, another problem emerged: a lack of follow-up. With the publication of the final installment, Dasani and her family largely disappeared from the pages of the *Times*—and while the paper continued to run occasional pieces about homeless children in New York, the subject generally faded from view.

In both conception and duration, the "Invisible Child" series displayed all the signs of an ingrained trait of American journalism: the pursuit of prizes. Probably no profession (except maybe the film industry) gives out more of them. In their lust for Pulitzer, Polk and Peabody awards, news organizations devote many man-hours to packaging entries for these competitions. To the extent that these prizes encourage publishers and editors to devote the time and money needed to carry out such projects, they deserve support. But the profession's prize-itis has also fed a blockbuster mentality in which papers make an all-out push on a given project—and then move on. As a result, any positive impact these projects initially have often wanes.

A counterexample is offered by Alan Schwarz's coverage of concussions in football, also appearing in the *Times*. In more than 100 articles spread over four years (2007 to 2011), Schwarz showed that the rate of concussions among pro-football players, and of dementia among retired ones, was far higher than had been suspected. Schwarz also documented the National Football League's efforts to obfuscate these results and the helmet industry's failure to provide a product offering sufficient protection. His articles forced the NFL to overhaul its rules for handling concussions; helped spur the resignation of two members of a league committee that had conducted flawed research on the issue; prompted several congressional hearings on sports-related brain injuries; and inspired many other journalists to look into the incidence of concussions in sports in general.

In short, Schwarz changed the entire public discourse on the issue. Notably, his reporting was not part of any investigative project, nor was he an investigative reporter. Rather, Schwarz was a beat sports reporter with a love of math and statistics (which helped him discern patterns in the data on injuries and illnesses that others might overlook), and one who, seeing an injustice, wouldn't let it drop. Murray Chass, the renowned *Times* sportswriter, has called it "the most remarkable feat in sports journalism history."

An ingrained trait of American journalism is the pursuit of prizes. Probably no profession (except maybe the film industry) gives out more of them.

Schwarz's stories dealt with a deep-seated institutional problem. Many investigative projects, by contrast, focus on abuses at a particular company, a single agency or one college campus. Such reporting is certainly worthwhile and can serve as the building blocks for a larger-scale probe, but overall, the field has, I think, suffered from a narrowness of vision and a lack of ambition.

The transformative impact that a news organization can have when it sets its sights higher is shown by *The Boston Globe*'s reporting on sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. A team of reporters worked on the story for eight months before the publication of the first article in January 2002. It was followed by hundreds of stories extending over more than two years. The *Globe* reporters documented the abuse that scores of priests in the Boston Archdiocese had inflicted on hundreds of minors, as well as the steps that the church had taken to keep the details from becoming public. The *Globe* eventually set up a website offering thousands of pages of depositions, letters and internal church documents, augmented by video, message boards and photo galleries, plus a phone number that people could call with abuse stories. These efforts helped prompt the resignation of the archbishop of Boston and the filing of many lawsuits against the diocese. The revelations, in turn, encouraged victims throughout the country and in other nations to come forward with their own stories.

POETRY ARCHIVE

December 7, 1963

Parting

Adrienne Rich

White morning flows into the mirror.
Her eye, still old with sleep,
meets itself like a sister.

How they slept last night,
the dream that caged them back to back,
was nothing new.

Last words, tears, most often
come wrapped as the everyday
familiar failure.

Now, pulling the comb slowly
through her loosened hair,
she tries to find the parting;

it must come out after all:
hidden in all that tangle
there is a way.

Such triumphs do not come cheap. The *Globe* spent more than $1 million on the project and tens of thousands of dollars in legal costs. Beyond a strong financial commitment, however, the paper was willing to stick with the story and keep a spotlight on it. Such persistence remains exceptional in American journalism.

Its absence is especially glaring in what is perhaps the most urgent story of the day: the rise of the global oligarchy. While income inequality has received extensive coverage, the essential nature of the new plutocracy it has spawned has not. The activities of tycoons like David Rubenstein, Stephen Schwarzman, Leon Black, Daniel Loeb, Paul Tudor Jones, Henry Kravis, Lloyd Blankfein, Jamie Dimon, Bill Gates, Paul Allen and the Walton family; institutions like Blackstone, the Carlyle Group, Silver Lake Partners, Pimco and Third Point;

Unburying the Lede

A start-up manual for reinvigorating investigative reporting

1. The most important man in finance. As the head of BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, Laurence Fink oversees the investment of more than $4 trillion in assets. The company is so huge and a party to so many federal contracts that many think it's too big to fail. As a senior bank executive told *Vanity Fair*, the company is "like the Blackwater of finance, almost a shadow government." Yet it—and Fink—are barely known outside Wall Street.

2. Deficit slayer. Peter Peterson, the co-founder of the Blackstone Group, a private-equity firm, has funneled $1 billion into the Peter G. Peterson Foundation and other initiatives aimed at reducing the federal deficit, balancing the budget and cutting safety-net programs. His efforts have earned support among the political elite—a classic case of financial capital being converted into political capital. He and his campaign deserve much more scrutiny than they have gotten to date.

3. Equity ≠ equality. Blackstone is one of scores of private-equity firms that have acquired immense wealth by arranging leveraged buyouts, mergers and acquisitions. Others include the Carlyle Group, Apollo Global Management, KKR & Company, Silver Lake Partners and Warburg Pincus. To what extent have they contributed to the growth of inequality and the hollowing out of the middle class?

4. Media-mogul mecca. Every July, media executives gather at the Sun Valley Resort in Idaho for a week of schmoozing and deal-making with bankers and financiers. A select group of journalists is also invited (participants have included Charlie Rose, Ken Auletta, Tom Brokaw and Thomas Friedman), but because the conference imposes a strict blackout on its proceedings, coverage is scant. An account of what takes place there could offer insight into the forces contributing to media concentration in America.

5. The plumpest of them all. Depending on the year, Carlos Slim is either the first-, second- or third-richest man in the world. Slim's telecommunications empire controls 80 percent of the fixed lines and 70 percent of the cellphones in Mexico, enabling it to charge outrageously inflated prices. His operations have contributed to the endemic poverty in Mexico that drives so many migrants to the United States. In the last year, his empire has finally become a target of Mexican antitrust regulations, but his name rarely surfaces in the American press. As it happens, he recently became the largest individual shareholder in *The New York Times*. It's time for the paper to show that such an investment can't buy silence.

6. Healthy debate. Since the creation of his foundation in 2000, Bill Gates has donated about $30 billion to organizations working in global health and development, with a special focus on Africa. While such money has clearly done much good, it has also spurred complaints that the foundation's priorities—combating AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—have lured doctors and nurses away from providing urgently needed but less exciting everyday care.

7. Charters and Wall Street. Bill Gates has also contributed billions of dollars to promote charter schools, standardized testing, the Common Core and reducing school size. The charter-school movement as a whole has been heavily backed by private-equity investors, hedge-fund managers and the Walton Family Foundation (led by the family that founded Walmart). Through such efforts, the American oligarchy has become the dominant force in shaping education policy, pushing schools to adopt market-based solutions and—in the eyes of critics—undermining support for public education. Documenting the activities of those involved could be a beat unto itself.

8. Image management. Now that former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has resumed control of the financial and media company he founded, his close ties with Goldman Sachs are posing potential conflicts. In March 2012, Mayor Bloomberg visited the company to show his support during a bout of bad publicity. After leaving office, he agreed to serve as an advisory co-chair of Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Small Businesses program, which seeks to foster growth in that sector, and has appeared at events with Goldman chief Lloyd Blankfein. How is this relationship affecting coverage of the firm by Bloomberg's news division?

9. Blue-chip white shoes. David Boies is perhaps best known for arguing the case before the US Supreme Court to overturn California's gay-marriage ban. But he is also a top corporate litigator whose clients have included Philip Morris, Texaco, American Express and former Enron executive Andrew Fastow. Currently, he's representing former AIG head Maurice Greenberg in his suit against the federal government, which alleges that the 2008 bailout of that company was unfair to shareholders. Boies is but one of a cadre of elite lawyers dedicated to protecting the wealth of oligarchs and keeping them out of prison.

10. Buying minds. The documentary *Inside Job* showed how professors at business schools profit from unreported consultancies and directorships, creating potential conflicts of interest. Less attention has been paid to the donations that corporations, banks and entrepreneurs make to universities. In 2011, for example, Citigroup gave $25 million to Columbia, Harvard, MIT, Stanford and Yale to research the "financial services landscape" as it relates to technology, innovation, globalization and consumer behavior. "I believe banks should play a leadership role in advancing the conversation on the future of finance," Vikram Pandit, then the chief executive of Citigroup, said in announcing the grant. Hundreds of similar grants have been made to establish programs and chairs in a range of fields—all seeking the "intellectual capture" of the academy and, through it, of the American mind. It's a subject ripe for sustained inquiry. **—MM**

forums and meeting places like Davos, the Bilderberg Group, the Aspen Institute's Ideas Festival, the TED conferences, the Clinton Global Initiative, Google's Zeitgeist gathering and the Grill Room of the Four Seasons—this great interlocking world of big banks, hedge funds, money managers, private-equity and venture-capital funds, foundations and philanthropies has received only sporadic and superficial coverage in the American press. These titans—the 1 percent of the 1 percent—not only control tremendous wealth but also use it to buy influence, shape policies, promote ideas, sway public opinion and push their favorite projects. Yet aside from occasional exposés (like Jane Mayer's important examination of the Koch brothers), we mostly get admiring profiles of innovators, geniuses and visionaries.

The great interlocking world of big banks, hedge funds, money managers and venture-capital funds has received only sporadic and superficial coverage in the American press.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THERE HASN'T been much good reporting on the world of big money. In the lead-up to the financial collapse, Mark Pittman of Bloomberg wrote story after story revealing the deceptive and risky practices of Wall Street. *The New York Times*, in its "Reckoning" series, performed an extended autopsy on the actions that had led to the collapse. In 2012, Reuters exposed widespread misconduct by Chesapeake Energy, leading to the ouster of the company's chief executives, and a *Times* investigation into bribery by Walmart executives in Mexico provoked several top resignations and the opening of a federal investigation. For the most part, though, these stories do not offer the type of sweeping, ongoing scrutiny that could truly shake things up.

Such an approach was once common. In 1902 and 1903, for instance, *McClure's Magazine* ran Ida Tarbell's dissection of the Standard Oil Company. In nineteen monthly installments, the indefatigable Tarbell exposed the extralegal strong-arm tactics used by John D. Rockefeller and his agents to gain monopoly control of the booming oil industry. Her reporting gave rise to an antitrust suit that led to the Supreme Court's landmark 1911 decision to break up the company.

In a more recent example, *TheMarker*, an Israeli financial newspaper distributed as a supplement to *Haaretz*, waged an unflagging campaign beginning in the mid-2000s against the extraordinary concentration of economic power in Israel and the dangers that this development posed to Israeli society and democracy. Led by its founding editor, Guy Rolnik, the paper ran periodic stories and columns that paid special attention to the "Israeli oligarchs," a small group of billionaires and their families who controlled much of the Israeli economy. When the campaign began, the subject of economic concentration was barely discussed in Israel. The stories fed growing outrage over inequality, leading to a series of mass demonstrations in 2011. Those protests, in turn, spurred the Knesset to pass a bill to break up the Israeli conglomerates. It was a remarkable display of how one news organization, through tenacious and unflinching reporting over a period of years, can help spur systemic change.

One of the few journalistic forays in this country to have even a remotely comparable effect was Matt Taibbi's famous 2009 polemic in *Rolling Stone* on Goldman Sachs. At the time, that company had such an aura of invincibility that few journalists were willing to take it on. Taibbi's nearly 10,000-word account of the firm's history of manipulating the market—highlighted by his lurid description of it as a "giant vampire squid"—helped break the cone of silence around it. Unfortunately, few picked up his lead, and Goldman Sachs has since skillfully rehabilitated itself, thanks in part to its savvy use of philanthropy and manipulation of the media. (See sidebar, No. 8.)

Taibbi was preparing to do more such corporate poking at the Racket, a website conceived by Pierre Omidyar's First Look Media, but an internal blowup led to his abrupt departure and the project's collapse. Remarkably, of the many high-profile digital-journalism sites—the Huffington Post, the Daily Beast, BuzzFeed, Business Insider—not one scrutinizes America's oligarchs the way *TheMarker* did Israel's. (ProPublica, the prime investigative site on the web, has done impressive reporting on a number of important subjects, including fracking and the secret Fed tapes, but in general it remains wedded to a traditional narrow-focus approach.)

How to explain such timorousness? Clearly, the economic travails of the news business have reduced its appetite for major projects, but this explains only so much. More important, perhaps, is the fear that many American journalists have of appearing partisan or one-sided. In a Q&A with the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Alan Schwarz specifically mentioned his aversion to being labeled a crusader. "Dispassion is incredibly powerful in a reporter," he said. "It drives people crazy. If I come off as somebody who's trying to change football, I lose something." If you stray too far, he added, people "cut you off."

Yet showing passion doesn't mean having to jettison principles like fairness and giving all sides their say. Perhaps the term "campaigner" is better than "crusader" (especially given how the Crusades turned out). In the end, though, reporters must be willing to live with such labels. It's the price of letting their indignation show.

Ultimately, the main obstacle to truly groundbreaking reporting is intellectual. American journalists need to break free of their current constricting emphasis on "exposés" and "scoops" and adopt a more expansive program that seeks to bare the underlying realities of money, power and influence in America—to show how things really work. **150th**

TESTIMONIALS

HOUSE MINORITY LEADER

NANCY PELOSI

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Privacy 2.0: Surveillance in the Digital State

Despite the revolution in digital technology, privacy doesn't have to go the way of the eight-track player.

DAVID COLE

IMAGINE A STATE THAT COMPELLED ITS CITIZENS TO INFORM IT AT ALL times of where they are, who they are with, what they are doing, who they are talking to, how they spend their time and money, and even what they are interested in. None of us would want to live there. Human-rights groups would condemn such a state for denying the most basic elements of human dignity and freedom. We'd pity its citizens for their inability to enjoy the rights and privileges we know are essential to a liberal democracy.

In fact, this is the state in which we now live—with one minor wrinkle: the US government does not compel us directly to share any of the above intimate information with it. Instead, it relies on private companies to collect such information—and then it takes it from them at will. We "consent" to share this information with the companies that connect us to our intensely hyperlinked world. Our cellphones constantly apprise the phone company of where we are, as well as with whom we are talking or texting. When we send an e-mail, we share the address information, subject line and content with the Internet service provider. When we search the web or read something online, we reveal our interests to the company that runs our browser or search engine. And when we purchase anything with a credit card, the company that issued the card maintains a record of the transaction.

In the digital age, the government has effectively outsourced much of its surveillance to private companies, and we should impose limits on them as well.

In short, we share virtually everything about our lives—much of it intensely personal—with some private company. (While some Internet companies, such as DuckDuckGo, promise not to collect personal information, most do, both to provide you their service and to capitalize on the information they thereby gather.) In theory, we can also refuse our "consent": we can choose to live as hermits, cut off from all the forms of communication that dominate modern existence. But that's a high price to pay for privacy. Surely we can have our smartphones and our privacy, too?

While we don't consent to share our personal electronic profile with the government, a series of Supreme Court rulings dating back to the analog age holds that what we share with "third parties" like Google is no longer private, at least vis-à-vis the government obtaining that information from the third party. So if the FBI wants to find out whom we've been calling and where we've been, it can demand our phone and location records from the phone company. If it wants to know what websites we've been visiting, it can demand those records from the Internet service provider. Under the Supreme Court's third-party disclosure rule, the government can obtain this information without any basis for suspecting us of wrongdoing, and without bothering to get a judicial warrant.

As a result of the digital revolution and the third-party doctrine, the face of privacy has changed, and it will continue to change dramatically. Unless we respond appropriately, we are in danger of seeing privacy go the way of the eight-track player. And that has immense consequences not only for our personal lives, but for the character of our country. For privacy is not only a personal right, but a collective good—a cornerstone of democracy.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION for surveillance cannot be overstated. Before the advent of computerized records and the Internet, much of the information that is now routinely collected about us was either unavailable or available only at prohibitive cost. If the government wanted to know where you were every moment of the day, it could assign someone to tail you 24/7. But that was expensive and almost impossible to carry off without detection. Moreover, even round-the-clock surveillance couldn't see what you were doing behind walls. Now we all carry a smartphone with us at virtually all times, which automatically tracks us nonstop and transmits that information to the phone company.

In the old days, if the government wanted to know what you were reading or thinking about, it could search your home to see what was there—but that required probable cause of criminal activity and a warrant. And even then, it would find only those materials that you kept on hand; it would have no real way to know what you were thinking about, short of asking you directly. Now it can download your search history from Google, which knows better than you do yourself what you have been thinking about. And the computer never forgets.

Computers don't just have perfect memory; they also have the capacity to store and analyze massive amounts of information about any one of us—or, as Edward Snowden's 2013 disclosures on government surveillance revealed, about *all* of us. Snowden showed that for more than a decade, the National Security Agency has been collecting telephone metadata—whom we call and how long we talk—on virtually every American. The NSA maintains this data in a high-tech storage facility in Utah for five years and can search it for ties to the phone numbers of suspected terrorists.

The NSA's surveillance abroad is even more intrusive. The agency has intercepted and collected massive quantities of electronic communications—texts, phone calls, e-mails, contact lists and Internet browsing—from millions of foreign nationals, without any basis for suspecting them of wrongdoing. Dragnet surveillance that was until recently impossible is now entirely feasible.

Digital technology has exponentially expanded the government's ability to construct intimate portraits of any particular individual by collecting all sorts of disparate data and combining and analyzing them for revealing patterns. A single phone call, credit-card transaction or location might not tell very much about someone's private life. But if the phone call was from a married man to a single woman, and the location

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data showed that the two were together shortly thereafter and then purchased a morning-after pill at a local pharmacy, the implication would be clear.

Defenders of the new surveillance insist that the NSA's domestic-surveillance program is appropriately limited because the government merely collects metadata, not the content of calls. But "metadata absolutely tells you everything about somebody's life," as Stewart Baker, former general counsel of the NSA, has acknowledged. "If you have enough metadata, you don't really need content." For example, the metadata can reveal whether a person called a rape-crisis center, a suicide or drug-treatment hotline, a bookie or a particular political organization. When I quoted Baker's statement during a debate with the former director of the NSA, Gen. Michael Hayden, he readily concurred and even raised Baker one, bragging: "We kill people based on metadata."

Privacy is one of the few remaining areas that can unite liberals and conservatives.

Defenders of the new surveillance also argue that as long as there are enough back-end limits on how the information can be used, we ought not be concerned about the government collecting and storing it. For example, the NSA's phone database can be accessed only by a limited number of NSA analysts, for counterterrorism purposes, when they have reasonable suspicion that a phone number is tied to a terrorist. But the collection itself imposes privacy costs, irrespective of how the information is subsequently used. I don't think we'd accept the NSA collecting videotape from every American's bedroom, no matter what back-end limits were placed on the use of the results. Moreover, once a database exists, what is to stop any "mission creep" in its use? If it can be searched for terrorists today, why not for serial murderers or rapists tomorrow? Where is the limiting principle?

Defenders of the new surveillance typically argue that if you have nothing to hide, then you have nothing to fear. This familiar claim ignores the fact that privacy is valuable not just to criminals, but to all of us. We all close the doors to our bedrooms and our homes, whether or not we are engaged in criminal conduct. We all use password protection for our personal computers, regardless of whether we are doing anything wrong. Privacy serves a multitude of ends other than protecting criminals; if that weren't the case, we wouldn't have protected it in the first place.

POETRY ARCHIVE

September 2, 1961

The Starry Night

Anne Sexton

"That does not keep me from having a terrible need of—shall I say the word—religion. Then I go out at night to paint the stars."
—Vincent Van Gogh, in a letter to his brother

The town does not exist
except where one black haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die:

into the rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry.

SOME ARGUE THAT PRIVACY IS A RELATIVELY recent phenomenon, because for most of history humankind lived in small rural settings where everyone knew everyone else's secrets. But that claim is both overstated and beside the point. It is overstated because, while modernity has in some ways increased the opportunities to protect confidences, it has also, as Snowden's disclosures reveal, reduced those opportunities. I suspect, moreover, that it was always the case that people sought to keep secrets—and did so. Most important, however, the question is not whether privacy is of recent vintage, but whether it is valuable. If we value it, then we should struggle to preserve it from the onslaught of new surveillance technology.

It is possible to adjust the rules to accommodate new technology. The Supreme Court has done so repeatedly in response to, for example, automobiles, telephones and even thermal-imaging devices (used to detect indoor marijuana growing). In 2012, the Court ruled that the Fourth Amendment restricts the government's use of a GPS device to track a car's public movements around the clock for twenty-eight days. The government had relied on an analog-era precedent holding that its agents could use a beeper hidden in a package to track an automobile trip on public roads, reasoning that what is observable in public is not private. In the GPS case, however, the Court reached the opposite conclusion, and five currently serving justices specifically acknowledged that digital technology changes the calculus and requires a new, more protective rule.

In 2014, the government again sought to rely on an analog-era precedent in a digital context—and again lost. *Riley v. California* involved the authority to search an individual's cellphone upon arrest. The existing rule said the police could automatically search the arrestee and any container on his person. The government argued that a smartphone was "materially indistinguishable" from any other container and was therefore equally subject to search. The Court unanimously rejected that claim. In the words of Chief Justice John Roberts, "That is like saying a ride on horseback is materially indistinguishable from a flight to the moon."

The Court has not yet addressed whether the third-party disclosure rule needs a digital update (although Sotomayor has suggested that it may need to do so). The opinions in the GPS and smartphone cases, however, indicate that the Court recognizes we are indeed in a brave new world.

Congress can also enact laws to protect privacy from the threats that new technology poses. In the past, Congress has responded to Supreme Court decisions denying *constitutional* privacy protection by enacting laws that provide *statutory* protection. Thus, while the Fourth Amendment puts no limit on the government's ability to obtain records from one's bank or telephone company, Congress has enacted statutes that do. And while the current Congress seems incapable of doing much at all, privacy is one of the few remaining areas that can unite liberals and conservatives. In 2014, the USA Freedom Act, which would have reined in the NSA's phone-metadata program and reformed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support; in the Senate, it came up only two votes short of the sixty needed to overcome a filibuster. An important statutory authority for the NSA's domestic phone-data program expires in 2015, so the issue is by no means dead.

State courts and legislatures can also play a part. New surveillance technologies are available and used at the state as well as the federal level. About 99 percent of criminal-law enforcement is carried out by states and local agencies. While the protections under state law can't fall below the floor established by the US Constitution, states are free to provide even greater protection—and many do.

Finally, we must also confront the threats to privacy posed by the private sector. We certainly have more to fear from the state than from Google: only the state has the power to arrest, prosecute and imprison, and governments—including our own—have a record of targeting dissenters. But the private sector also intrudes on our privacy, and we should limit what it can do with the information it gathers from and about us. In Europe, for example, data-protection laws restrict what both the private and public sectors can do with private information. In the digital age, the government is effectively outsourcing much of its surveillance to private companies, and we should impose limits on them as well.

In short, privacy has never been more vulnerable than it is today. The digital era has brought us many delightful conveniences, but it has simultaneously created previously unthinkable perils. Some have pointed to these developments to argue that privacy is already dead. That's a dangerous overstatement: reports of privacy's demise are, for the moment, greatly exaggerated. But it may be on life support. And unless we insist on new rules to govern and regulate the use of these new technologies, it's not only our privacy that will be lost, but all that depends on privacy as well—including democracy itself. **150th**

Move to Amend

The US Constitution began as a flawed document, and its many amendments since then have made us a better nation.

JOHN NICHOLS

WALT WHITMAN GOT IT RIGHT, TEN YEARS BEFORE THE founding of *The Nation*, when he advised Americans to "re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul." This goes double for the left, which cannot afford to neglect the crumbling infrastructure of our democracy, or to treat as sacrosanct a creaking Constitution that thwarts rather than extends the will of the people.

Nothing locks in inequality and dysfunction like a Constitution so imprecise that it allows right-wing judicial activists to make buying elections easy and voting in them hard. But don't just blame "constitutional conservatives" for turning our founding document into an outline for oligarchy. Fret about liberal constitutionalists who imagine we're just one thrilling presidential appointment away from making our democratic vistas real. Like Democrats dreaming of another FDR, liberals waiting for another Earl Warren miss the point. Our democratic destiny is not something to wait for—it's something we have to make happen. Dissident Americans have been bending the arc of history by rewriting the US Constitution since amendments were added with quill pens. Today's dissenters should be about the business of doing so once more.

The Constitution should be clarified so that it sustains rather than throttles democracy.

The Constitution began as a flawed document based on compromises between barely reformed royalists and slaveholders whose definition of "liberty" did not include the "property" they finally agreed would be counted as three-fifths of a human being. The most enlightened thinkers and the boldest rabble-rousers were not in the room at the founding moment. Tom Paine was fomenting revolution elsewhere and imagining progressive taxation. Ethan Allen was still in trouble for challenging organized religion with his pamphlet *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man*. Daniel Shays had yet to be pardoned for arranging a popular rebellion against oppressive debt collection. Instead of democracy, the Constitution of 1787 gave us an unelected Senate, an Electoral College and too many structures intended to control the unruly masses. Americans who had fought to end the abuses of old elites objected to the prospect of being abused by new ones: they demanded and by 1791 had won the ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights. Seventeen more amendments have come into being since then, including some that radically restructured how members of the executive and legislative branches are chosen and serve, and others that extended the franchise even more radically—to African-Americans, the poor, women and 18- to 21-year-olds.

These amendments made the United States a different and better nation. But we are not different and better enough. Foreseeing our contemporary circumstance, Thomas Jefferson counseled against viewing the Constitution as "too sacred to be touched," warning: "We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors." Jefferson also argued, "The real friends of the Constitution in its federal form, if they wish it to be immortal, should be attentive, by amendments, to make it keep pace with the advance of the age in science and experience."

THE REAL FRIENDS OF THE CONSTITUTION today champion a "move to amend" that would declare that corporations are not people, that money is not speech, and that votes must matter more than billionaires' dollars. Sixteen states and some 600 communities have recently demanded that Congress initiate a constitutional response to the judicial activism that has allowed elites to commodify our politics and corporatize our governance. At the same time, activists are taking up a proposal by Congressmen Mark Pocan and Keith Ellison to end the crude assault on voting rights with an amendment that establishes, finally and unequivocally, a right to vote and to have every vote counted. These are good starting points, but they are not an end to anything.

The Constitution should be clarified so that it sustains rather than throttles democracy. Do away with the Electoral College. Ban the practice of gerrymandering. Close the loophole that allows governors to appoint cronies to vacant Senate seats. And then get serious: ask, as Congressman Victor Berger did more than a century ago, why America maintains a House of Lords–style Senate where, today, the vote of a member elected by 121,000 Wyomingites can cancel out the vote of a member elected by 7.8 million Californians. Consider electing members of the House to four-year terms that parallel those of the president, so that the popular will of 131 million voters in the presidential elections can't be stymied by 90 million midterm voters. Object to any calculus that prevents a majority-black District of Columbia and a majority-Hispanic Puerto Rico from becoming states. Re-examine every barrier to democracy, including those of poverty, ignorance and incapacity. When Franklin Roosevelt spoke of the freedoms required to shape democratic societies, he included "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear." Let's restart that debate about freedom and democracy. And let's do so not in the drab language of bureaucratic reform, but in the radical language of giving power to the people. No constitution can repair every breach in society, but a renewed US Constitution can clear the way for the people—the whole people, as opposed to a handful of elites—to forge a more perfect union.

The point, after all, is not the perfection of a document; it is the power of the people to shape their future. Something remarkable happens when transformative power is on offer: apathy ends. I saw it in Scotland in 2014, when voters considered declaring independence from the United Kingdom and from the austerity policies of London's mandarins. Popular engagement exploded; voter turnout soared above 85 percent. And while independence was not declared—this time—politics was transformed into something real. This is what the left should offer America: a vision of a next politics where, as Robert M. La Follette proposed, "The will of the people shall be the law of the land."

Talk of structural change still frightens some liberals—as it does many conservatives. Opening up a big debate requires faith in humanity. And even those who harbor such faith will ask: How can we, the people, ever beat the billionaires and media moguls of a digital age? As if it was easy to beat the robber barons and press lords of the new twentieth century on behalf of amendments to elect senators, impose taxes and enfranchise women. Yes, going to the root of the matter is daunting. But the alternative is a strategy of managing democratic decline. And that is no strategy for a left that seeks a transformative politics.

What, then, should be the end of this striving? Let us aim for the goal that Tom Paine outlined in *Rights of Man*: "When it shall be said in any country in the world, my poor are happy; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars; the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive; the rational world is my friend, because I am the friend of its happiness: when these things can be said, then may that country boast of its constitution and its government." **150th**

The point, after all, is not the perfection of a document; it is the power of the people to shape their future.

A Red by Any Other Name

Why a new generation of radicals has chosen to organize under the "socialist" banner.

BHASKAR SUNKARA

WHEN REVOLUTION BROKE OUT IN ST. PETERSBURG IN 1905, Vladimir Lenin, a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, wrote a treatise on "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution." At the same time, in Germany, Rosa Luxemburg was organizing within the Social Democratic Party's tent.

A decade and change later, when Lenin's ragged band of Bolsheviks stormed the Winter Palace and won state power, they did so under the banner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Similarly, when Luxemburg took part in the ill-fated German Revolution, it was as a member of the Communist Party of Germany.

For Lenin, especially—who remained loyal to the ideas of German Social Democratic Party theorist Karl Kautsky even when Kautsky was no longer loyal to them himself—this change in language was not meant to signal a shift in ideology. What it did symbolize was outrage at the betrayal of a movement that had capitulated to—and even abetted—European capitalism as it plunged the world into a Great War that would kill more than 16 million people.

They called themselves "communists" to be the *real* "social democrats."

For decades afterward, radicals embraced the label "communist"—often at great personal risk—to proclaim not just their allegiance to the Soviet Union, but to the spirit of hope and transformation embodied in those early workers'

TESTIMONIALS

SARITA GUPTA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOBS WITH JUSTICE

As the number of journalists covering the labor beat grows smaller and smaller, and as the shifting media landscape makes it easier to cover the sensationalist stories rather than the serious ones, *The Nation* has forged a much bolder path. *The Nation* has set a standard for journalistic excellence, choosing to bring the voices of working people directly to its pages, and telling the real stories of poverty, healthcare, aging and other issues facing the 99 percent. Whereas other outlets may devote 250 words to these issues, *The Nation* devotes a cover story. It offers insight into organizing strategies and ideas for the future of work in this country. When workers walk out on the job and stand up for better wages, *The Nation* is there. It is a critical ally in lifting up those workers' voices, making sure the larger conversation reflects their side of the story. The magazine has blazed a truly progressive trail. For all of us working in this movement, it feels good to have *The Nation* on our side.

movements and the Paris Commune.

This wasn't some "brand" conjured up by a public-relations firm; it was a word with deep roots in those struggles. Labels, after all, do matter: they connect new generations of activists with a real history and tradition, with the lives and ideas of the millions who came before them. The left often struggles with this. Debates that have no relevance still fracture and divide our many sects. One can sympathize with Pablo Iglesias, of Spain's Podemos party, when he decries those "trying to transform society by mimicking history, mimicking symbols."

Labels, after all, do matter: they connect new generations of activists with a real history, with the lives and ideas of the millions who came before them.

But it's also worth remembering Leszek Kolakowski's assertion that "the Left strives to base its prospects on the experience and evolutionary tendencies of history; whereas the Right is the expression of capitulation to the situation of the moment." This is why, Kolakowski says, "the Left can have a political ideology, while the Right has nothing but tactics."

Today, nearly a century after the October Revolution, I'm part of a new wave of Marxists who shy away from the "communist" label. Not because we've given up on grand narratives and the prospect of creating a society without class or want, but because we believe that in the same way the ideals of social democracy were betrayed during the Great War, those of the communist movement were tarnished by the crimes of the Soviet Union.

We prefer the broader and more inclusive term "socialist" instead—even if our own definitions of what it means differ.

Fundamentally, socialist politics are rooted in the idea that democracy should be radically extended from the political sphere into social and economic life. The only way to institute radical democracy of this sort is through the self-conscious activity of the great majority of workers—which includes many progressive people who, for very good reasons, associate the word "communist" with breadlines and gulags.

"Socialist" is a less alarming word. For many in the United States, it might not evoke anything more than Medicare or the interstate highway system. We don't want to spread our ideas by diluting them, but talking "socialism" is the best way to introduce a moral critique of capitalism and a discussion of its plausible alternatives. Proposing "communism" is more likely to repel than attract.

POETRY ARCHIVE

July 13, 1963

Tight Rope

LeRoi Jones

**We live in fragments
like speech. Like the fits
of wind, shivering against
the window.**

**Pieces of meaning, pierced
and strung together. The bright bead
of the poem, the bright bead
of your woman's laughter.**

And socialists have been hard at work organizing, even if our activity is often within broader left formations. We're doing things like supporting rank-and-file action in the labor movement and keeping a systemic critique alive within the environmental movement. We're organizing public outreach and education on issues like foreclosure resistance, and engaging with the inspiring new struggles against police brutality and racism.

Others do that same admirable work without repudiating the legacy of official communism, much less the "communist" label. Given how disastrous the transition to capitalism has been in Eastern Europe, and how brazen the United States' rulers have become since the demise of the Soviet Union, it's no surprise that some have turned to writing apologetics for Stalinism, or to fostering the illusion that it could have been reformed from within by the very bureaucracies it created.

In a world without any apparent alternative to the disastrous status quo, there's a natural appeal to the defeated path of one-party state socialism: at least that party once held power. But for Lenin and Luxemburg, belonging to a political movement wasn't about being an eccentric contrarian; it was about communicating ideas to as many people as possible and fighting alongside those people to bring about change. One cannot effectively do that today in the United States as a self-described "communist."

In some ways, however, it doesn't matter what we call ourselves: the right is going to tar us with the memory of Stalinism anyway. For the last century, any move toward a more equitable and decent society by liberals and radicals alike has been met with vicious redbaiting. That won't be changing anytime soon.

So while we might not want to label ourselves "communists," we can still be proud of the great legacy of communists in the United States. Radicals organizing under the banner of the Communist Party USA fought against racism in the Deep South. They fought for rank-and-file democracy in the union movement, helping to build the Congress of Industrial Organizations. They consistently defended civil rights and bravely resisted the war in Vietnam. To allow the achievements of these honorable militants to be conflated with the *nomenklatura* that oversaw labor camps an ocean away would be criminal.

And yet, to unthinkingly adopt all their old language and tactics would mean choosing the comforts of historical re-enactment over the challenge of winning in the here and now. We need to stay grounded in a tradition without letting that tradition subsume us. To be real communists today, we need to call ourselves "socialists." **150th**

Aiming Higher: Make College Tuition Free

Americans now owe more on their student loans than they do on their credit cards. Here's a simple way to end this travesty—and restore opportunity.

JON WIENER

THE MOTHER OF ALL PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY is high tuition at public colleges and universities, which forces students into decades of debt and makes for-profit schools seem like a plausible alternative.

College used to be free at institutions like the University of California and other state schools not that long ago. In 2014, tuition was abolished in, of all places, Tennessee. And in January, Obama asked Congress to fund a plan making two-year community colleges tuition-free. That's a good start, but we need more. Making four years of college free is not only fair; it's also politically possible.

The University of California provides an example of the problem. In 2014, in-state tuition and fees for undergrads totaled $13,222 for one year. And UC isn't even the most expensive public university: in-state tuition for the current school year at Penn State is $18,464. (The cheapest is the University of Wyoming, at $4,646 for one year.) As a result, two-thirds of college seniors now graduate with an average of $29,000 in student-loan debt. Students are told that incurring this debt is justifiable because a college education increases their earning power and boosts their "human capital"—which, they are told, is a financial advantage that goes beyond net worth. As *Forbes* explained it, student debt will provide "a solid return on your investment."

That rationale suggests the ubiquity of market logic today. But there's an alternative way of thinking: education is a public good. The purpose of education is not just to enable people to increase their lifetime incomes; it's to help them understand the world, to stimulate the imagination and inspire creativity in all fields. A good society provides opportunities for everyone. We need educated people. And we should be willing to pay to educate them.

> **How Germany abolished tuition provides a model for the United States, and it can be summed up in three words: protest and politics.**

Why is tuition so high? The original sin of today's public university systems can be found in the withering away of state funding. This is a recent phenomenon: in Ronald Reagan's campaign to become governor of California in 1964, he ran against the university, but he didn't raise the tuition after he won. When Reagan left office in 1975, UC tuition cost only $647. It skyrocketed after 1990: $2,700 in 2000, $5,400 in 2005, almost $10,000 in 2010. In California, Democrats won a supermajority in the state legislature in 2012, which let them accomplish political tasks once considered impossible (for example, making abortion more accessible), and last year voters turned drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. But there have been no cuts in tuition; the Democrats agreed only to freeze the increases—and now they've declared that the freeze is coming to an end. In response, the UC Board of Regents recently voted to increase tuition by 5 percent per year for the next five years. For residents, the tuition would go from $12,192 now to $15,564.

There's a simple, elegant solution to this travesty: tuition at public colleges should be free. You may say that's impossible, but, as noted, it was free in California and other states just fifty years ago. You may say that was then, this is now. But college is free now in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, while in France, public universities are free for students from lower-income families, and those from higher-income families pay about $200 a year. You may say none of these countries provide a good model for the United States, and that once tuition goes up, it never comes back down. But what about Germany? It introduced tuition eight years ago, but over the last eight years, every state in Germany has abolished it.

How they did it provides a model for the United States, and it can be summed up in three words: protest and politics. Some preliminary facts: Germany has the fourth-largest economy in the world. Public higher education there is controlled and funded by sixteen autonomous state governments rather than the federal government. Following the American example, those state governments imposed tuition starting in 2005. But German citizens organized the Alliance Against Tuition Fees, which included not just student unions but trade unions and political parties. Students marched in the streets all over the country after the first seven states introduced fees. In Hamburg, they organized a fee strike; in the state of Hesse, which includes Frankfurt, they occupied the universities, and 70,000 people signed a petition in support. The Christian Democratic government in Hesse, facing an election in 2008, reversed course and promised to eliminate tuition. "Those state governments that followed Hesse's lead in abolishing fees stayed in power," *Times Higher Education* reported; "those that refused were removed from office at the next election." Even in conservative Bavaria, 1.35 million voters—15 percent of the electorate—signed a petition opposing tuition, causing the state government to relent. If the conservative Christian Democrats in Germany—masters of austerity—can be pressured into eliminating tuition, why can't the same thing happen with the Democrats in the United States, especially in places like California, Illinois and New York?

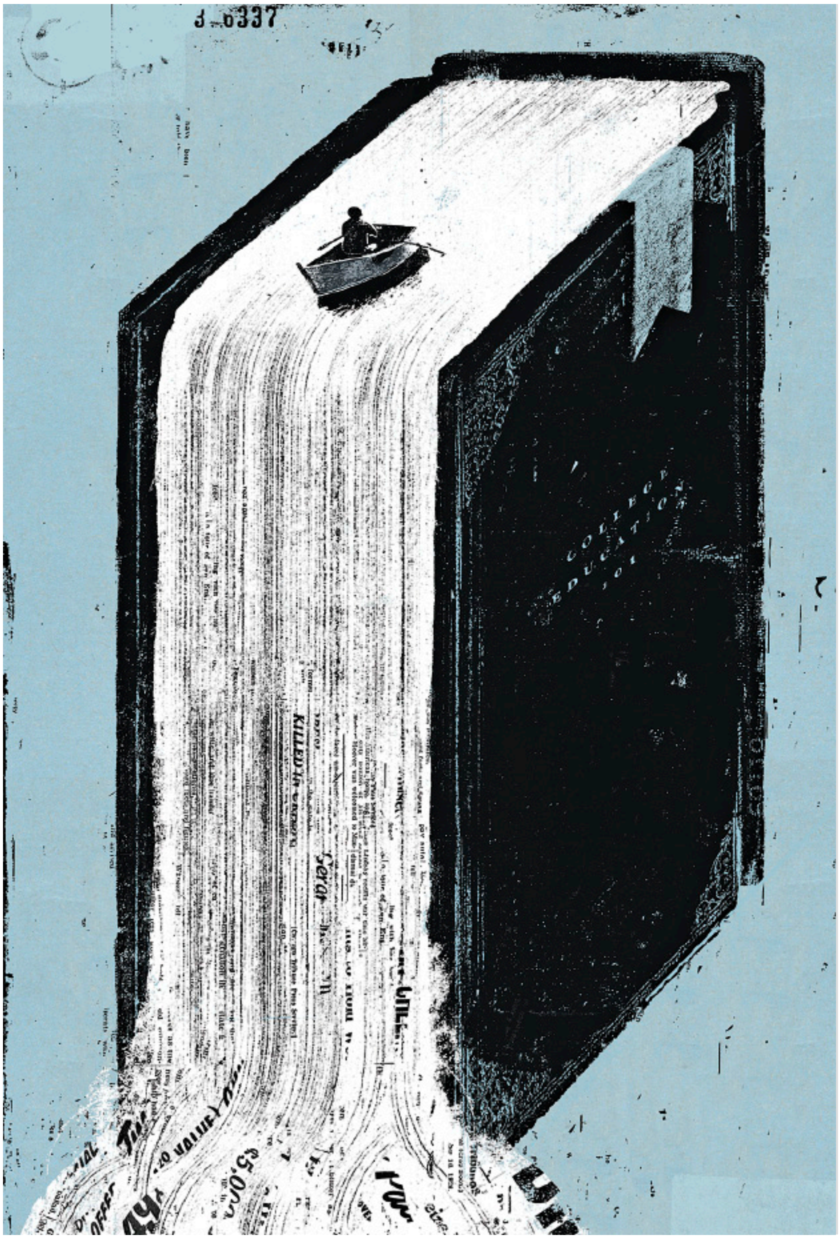
THE US GOVERNMENT ALREADY SPENDS LOTS of money on student aid. Federal spending in 2014, the College Board reports, includes $47 billion in grants, $101 billion in loans and $20 billion in tax credits. "With that kind of dough," says Anya Kamenetz of NPR, "there ought to be ways of buying better access and more equity." One prominent proposal, from the Campaign for Free College Tuition, calls for offering a full college scholarship to every academically qualified student whose family makes less than $160,000 a year. Instead of federal Pell Grants and tuition tax credits, we'd create an entitlement: all young people who qualify for college can go for free.

Obama's plan doesn't go that far: he proposes that the federal government pay three-quarters of the cost of tuition for two-year public community colleges, and that states pay the rest. Students would have to be enrolled at least half time, maintain a C-plus average and "make steady progress toward completing a program." If all fifty states agreed to fund the program, it could cover 9 million students and save each one about $3,800 a year. Republicans, of course, are not going to fund such an initiative, leading one GOP spokesman to label Obama's proposal "more of a talking point than a plan."

A little arithmetic suggests that the proposal would cost the federal government something like $25 billion a year, while the states would have to come up with another $6 billion. Republicans and Democrats alike say we can't afford it. But they stopped saying that in Tennessee in 2014: there, the legislature voted to make tuition and fees free for two years for all state high-school graduates who want to go to a community college or technical school. (Tuition there costs $4,000.) The State House of Representatives voted in favor of the bill 87 to 8; the vote in the State Senate was 30 to 1. And in case you were wondering, the Tennessee House has fifty-eight Republicans and twelve Democrats, while the Senate has twenty-seven Republicans and eight Democrats. The plan, available to students graduating from high school this year, has attracted almost 90 percent of the state's seniors—more than twice as many as expected. There's one other striking fact: in Tennessee, free tuition didn't come after massive student protests; it was a Republican idea, touted as a "pragmatic" program, part of a "strategy that worked."

Making college free would have one additional benefit: it would drive the predatory for-profit schools out of business.

If Tennessee can afford free tuition, so can everybody else. But how did Tennessee do it? Republican Governor Bill Haslam began by arguing that Tennessee needed more educated people, and then set a goal of increasing the number of residents who hold a college degree from 33 percent today to 55 percent by 2025. The state will pay for this by creating a self-sustaining endowment of $300 million. Most of the money comes from a lottery fund, and the legislature also voted to provide $47 million.



CURT MERLO

Tennessee is not alone. A similar proposal in Oregon will be voted on when the new legislature is seated in 2015. And Chicago recently announced a free-tuition program for the city's high-school students to attend two-year colleges, but Mayor Rahm Emanuel set so many prerequisites that only 3,000 of the city's 20,000 high-school graduates qualify. Tennessee, in contrast, has no prerequisites: all high-school graduates are eligible (but they must enroll full time and maintain a 2.0 GPA).

MAKING COLLEGE FREE WOULD have one additional benefit: it would drive the for-profit schools out of business. They now enroll 13 percent of those currently attending American colleges, or 2 million students. A Senate Education Committee report in 2012 released by Iowa Democrat Tom Harkin provided "overwhelming documentation of exorbitant tuition, aggressive recruiting practices, abysmal student outcomes, taxpayer dollars spent on marketing and pocketed as profit, and regulatory evasion and manipulation." For-profit colleges represent predatory capitalism at its worst. Instead of tightening regulations, as Obama has proposed, we could get rid of all for-profit colleges except those that provide real job skills not available at public schools.

Free tuition solves the problem for the future, but even if Obama's proposal for two-year colleges were funded by the Republicans, that would still leave millions of young people (and their parents) crippled by student debt for decades to come. Student debt in America now famously exceeds credit-card debt, totaling more than $1 trillion. Here, Obama's efforts have been woefully inadequate: his goal is not to abolish student debt, or even to reduce it, but rather to "make student debt more affordable and manageable to repay." He has provided some repayment schemes and established a deal to forgive loans after twenty years of payments—at which time the remaining balance will be taxed as income! It gets worse: as author and activist Barbara Garson points out, "thanks to intense bank lobbying starting in the 1970s, student loans are uniquely punitive" and "can't be discharged in bankruptcy." Most can't even be refinanced, which means that people who borrowed at 8 percent in the 1990s are still paying 8 percent—even though today's rates are much lower. Senator Elizabeth Warren has introduced legislation to allow refinancing, but even if she got that through Congress, it would still leave debtors paying market rates. And it gets even worse: borrowers who go more than 270 days without making a payment on their federal student loans are deemed "in default," and the Education Department pays nearly two dozen private debt collectors over $1 billion of taxpayer money annually to pursue the borrowers. Those targeted are subject to wage garnishments and the seizing of government benefits: Social Security can be garnished, and even disability checks.

A modest proposal: use that $1 billion not for debt collection, but for debt relief for student borrowers.

Occupy Wall Street activists have come up with a breathtaking strategy for providing immediate relief to student debtors. In mid-February, an Occupy offshoot called Rolling Jubilee announced that it was abolishing more than $13 million in debt originating from the for-profit Everest College, freeing more than 9,000 former students from that burden. The secret behind Rolling Jubilee is that defaulted debt is often sold for pennies on the dollar to debt collectors, who then try to collect the full amount. Rolling Jubilee declared itself a debt collector and purchased student debt on the open market—after raising money through small individual donations—and then notified the debtors that their debt was abolished. And a group of former students at the failing for-profit Corinthian Colleges Inc. have declared a debt strike. They are calling themselves the Corinthian 8, and their new organization Debt Collective. It's the first time people have collectively refused to pay their federal student loans, and their goal, Astra Taylor explains, is "to build people/debtor power to attack the problem at the root." Rolling Jubilee raises a question posed by Taylor and Hannah Appel at the web publication TomDispatch: "If a ragtag group of activists can find a way to provide immediate relief to even a few thousand defrauded students, why can't the government?"

Forgiving student debt has impressive popular backing: 1 million people signed a petition in support of the Student Loan Forgiveness Act in 2012, which was introduced by Michigan Democrat Hansen Clarke, with twenty-four co-sponsors. The benefits of student-loan forgiveness would extend well beyond the individuals involved. As Robert Applebaum of StudentDebtCrisis.org and StudentNation (at this magazine) writes, "Forgiving student loan debt would have an immediate stimulating effect on the economy." Former students freed of debt payments would spend money; jobs would be created, and tax revenues would go up.

Occupy's Rolling Jubilee, Republicans in Tennessee: you never know where you may find inspiration. **150th**

The Big Fix

Bringing back a strong and healthy labor movement is everybody's job—but to do it, we'll also have to repair our broken politics and dysfunctional corporations.

THOMAS GEOGHEGAN

AS A LABOR LAWYER, I HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE PAT ME ON THE head and say, "Do you think the labor movement will ever come back?" As if it's my problem and not theirs. Or as if it's something that "the unions" or "organized labor" have to do—not, as I think, an obligation that we all have as citizens.

I can give the usual, often hackneyed reasons for bringing back a labor movement. For starters, we need to raise wages—a lot—or there will be no middle class. From 2000 to 2012, the pay of the bottom 70 percent of Americans was flat or falling, even as non-farm productivity rose 30 percent. If we choose a longer time frame, it's even worse: since 1979, pay for most workers has barely budged—but productivity has risen 75 percent. It is impossible to keep up aggregate demand without pay raises, unless middle-class people go recklessly into debt. We did that in the lead-up to the financial crisis of 2008, and without a labor movement, we will do something similarly disastrous again.

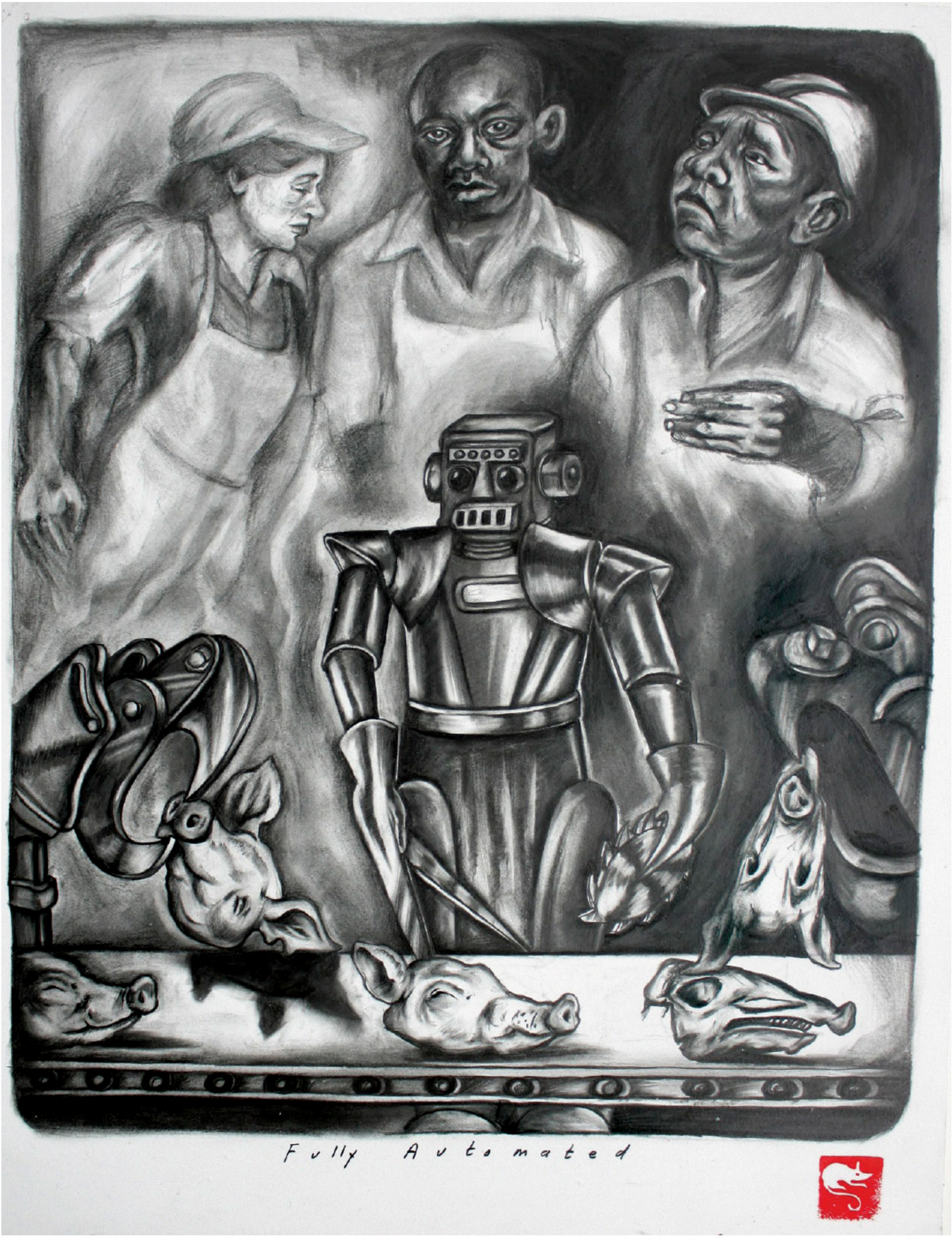
A labor movement will also help us recover our sense of citizenship by giving us more control over our lives. I used to complain that people no longer had unions. Now many of us no longer have employers, either. Even college grads with science degrees and high skills have to work as temps. We can't carry the bad habits that we acquire in the workplace—disengagement, learned helplessness, unquestioned obedience—into a democratic society and then expect that society to work.

I used to complain that people no longer had unions. Now many of us no longer have employers, either.

Is it even possible to bring back some kind of labor movement? Yes, it is—but we have to do three difficult things all at once:

First, we have to change our labor model. Here is a very difficult point to get across in this country: our labor model, based on "exclusive representation," is just plain weird. In the United States, either the union represents every single person in a plant or shop, with mandatory collection of dues, or it represents no one. For the most part, that's not the way it works in other parts of the world. In Belgium and Germany and just about everywhere else, the union represents the militant minority, the true believers, the men and women who really want to join. Since our model clearly isn't working, why not try things the way they do in countries that still have unions?

Second, we have to change our corporate model. To give people more control over what they do at work, we have to move from a dysfunctional stockholder model, in which CEOs are not accountable even to shareholders, to a stakeholder model, where managers are at least partially accountable to workers. Indeed, to bring back the labor movement, we might need to change our corporate law more than our labor law. One way to do this is to put in place more European-style works councils. Such works councils—which are elected by everyone, union


Fully Automated

SUE COE

or nonunion, including the managers—have special rights to sign off on how the work is done. Another way is to bring co-determination to our bigger companies—that is, to let workers elect up to a third of the directors who sit on the board if the company has 500 employees or more.

Third, we have to change our political model. We need a stronger national government—one capable of passing and enforcing the laws necessary to put a labor movement in place. We need a state strong enough or independent enough of the business interests that have weakened ours.

But we can't change our political model unless we restart a labor movement that brings more people to the polls. And that's the problem: we need to change our political model to change the labor and corporate models, and we need to change our labor and corporate models to mobilize enough people to change the political model. Indeed, to fix any one of these models—labor, corporate or political—we have to fix them all at once.

TESTIMONIALS

BILL MAHER

The Nation is America's oldest weekly magazine, but it hardly shows its age. When I chide Democratic politicians to grow a spine, it is to the truth-seeking prose of *The Nation* that I could point them for an example of what I mean. *The Nation* has sought to cast a beam of disinfecting sunlight on the murky messes in both the public and private sector. (It railed against the excesses of the Catholic Church, for example, long before I was an atheist or, for that matter, a zygote.)

As the producer of a weekly TV show that features (hopefully) smart and witty panelists, I often turn to *The Nation*'s stable of workhorses. The crosshatched section in the Venn diagram of *Nation* contributors and my guests over the years includes Noam Chomsky, Gore Vidal, Christopher Hitchens, Jeremy Scahill, Hunter S. Thompson, Melissa Harris-Perry, Ralph Nader, Tom Hayden, Kurt Vonnegut, Naomi Klein, Calvin Trillin, Amy Goodman and, of course, Katrina vanden Heuvel.

LET'S START WITH THE FEDERAL government. Yes, it's hard to fix the Constitution, a virtually unamendable document that invites gridlock. The Senate in particular pushes the country so far away from "one person, one vote" that one might wonder if we truly have a republican form of government. But in defense of the founders, they didn't invent the filibuster or gerrymandering, which has made labor-law reform impossible.

Some will ask, "What does the filibuster have to do with the labor movement?" Everything. Just as the filibuster was used to lock in slavery, today it helps lock in the status quo of low-wage America.

Just as the filibuster was used to lock in slavery, today it helps lock in the status quo of low-wage, union-free workplaces.

At least twice in my lifetime—first in 1978 and again in 1993—statutory labor-law reform proposed by a Democratic president passed a Democratic House and then died by filibuster in a Democratic Senate. The prospects have become so hopeless that during the Obama administration, no one even tried any statutory law. For the moment, with the Republicans holding the majority in the Senate, eliminating the filibuster wouldn't even matter. But one day, it will be the biggest obstacle to labor-law reform.

For the same reason, we have to fix the gerrymandering of the House. Perhaps that will change after 2020, a presidential election year, when more Democrats could end up drawing the districts. Or perhaps the Supreme Court will outlaw it sooner, if the balance of the Court changes.

To do any of these things, we have to mobilize more voters—not just during the midterm elections, but in presidential election years as well. The base is simply too narrow for Congress to have the legitimacy to do much. Just 37 percent of the electorate showed up in the last midterm election. Even in 2012, we had a turnout far below that of most democracies in the world.

But if the federal government is so weak, how can we change the corporate model? Like the Progressives a century ago, we can start with the states. It's at the state level that corporations get their charters. One or two states could get the ball rolling by requiring corporations to elect employees to corporate boards.

Wait—that's impossible, right? Corporations facing this new requirement would merely relocate to some other state with weaker laws. And that's true: many corporations are beyond our reach. But many nonprofits are trapped in their home states. Nonprofits may not be as big as Walmart or General Electric, but they're big enough. And they can't run off to Delaware to incorporate—or if they try, they could lose the all-important property-tax exemption within their home states.

It's easy to imagine that with an elected janitor in the same room as a nonprofit CEO making $300,000 a year, that organization's labor policies will start to change. Works councils might even sprout up. Besides, there's a good nonlabor reason to let the employees elect a few directors of the big nonprofits: they have no stockholders, and nonprofit boards are self-perpetuating. Electing a few nurses to the boards of big university hospitals, for example, might help them to hew more closely to their charitable mission. (It's important to note that this is about corporate governance, not labor law. There's nothing here about unions or collective bargaining.)

Once the idea of co-determination becomes real in the nonprofit sector, it will open up the chance to push it toward the for-profits. The president could encourage this development by using his procurement authority to issue an executive order saying, in effect, "Other things being equal, the government will prefer vendors that let employees elect at least a few directors to their boards."

FINALLY, AS MENTIONED EARLIER, WE NEED to change our labor model. We should have a law that protects employees' rights to join a union, freely and fairly, without being fired. In *The Nation* back in 2002, Barbara Ehrenreich and I made the case for a civil-rights act for labor. The idea is to enact a civil-rights law banning discrimination based on one's support of a union, just as we do in the case of race, age or gender.

Such a law would open up the labor movement in ways we have not seen in decades. It would give individual workers—not just union organizations—more control over when and how to organize. Employees could retain a lawyer and press for remedies that even the strongest unions do not have right now. What would they get?

Preliminary injunctions, punitive damages, juries, legal fees to help fund organizing drives—and, best of all, a discovery phase during which they could depose CEOs and more or less rifle through the corporate files.

THE IDEA OF SUCH A CIVIL-RIGHTS LAW IS slowly moving out of the op-ed pages and into the congressional debate. In the House last summer, Progressive Caucus co-chair Keith Ellison and civil-rights icon John Lewis introduced the Employee Empowerment Act, which would enable workers to file civil complaints against employers who violate basic labor rights.

There is little hope for such a bill in the current political climate, of course. Many people believe that in the absence of significant labor-law reform, initiatives like the "Fight for $15" minimum-wage campaign and "alt-labor" movements like OUR Walmart are the best way to go. These are great causes, but they have limits. For one thing, they rely on foundation funding. In the long run, the money should come from unionized high-skilled workers. The more of them we can organize, the easier it will be to support efforts to organize lesser-skilled workers.

Even under current law, we could try organizing for the few rather than for the majority. We could give up the prize of "exclusive representation" and aim to represent the militant minority who want to join. As a labor staffer in Germany told me, "If we had to get a majority vote here, we wouldn't have any unions either." So forget 50 percent plus one—let's go for 40 percent, or 30 percent.

Look at the approach of Volkswagen and the United Auto Workers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the heart of non-union Dixie. Last February, the UAW lost an election for exclusive representation. But it didn't pack up and go home; it kept pressing. In November, Volkswagen said it would meet with any union that had the support of 15 percent of its employees—and pledged to meet every other week with a union that had 45 percent support. This followed a tentative pre-election deal in which Volkswagen agreed to a works council that would take the lead in negotiating plant rules and that the UAW would not control if it became the exclusive representative.

Some say it's impossible to give up exclusive representation. Here's one objection: "If there is no certification as exclusive representative, then the employer has no legal duty to bargain." There are two responses to this. First, it's likely that the employer has such a duty to bargain whenever workers exercise their right to act collectively under Section 7 of the Wagner Act, the basic labor right from which all others follow. Under Obama, the National Labor Relations Board might yet reach that interpretation. Arguably, Section 8(a)(5), which creates the duty to bargain, does not make it conditional on the union being the exclusive representative; it just precludes an employer ignoring an exclusive representative to bargain with someone else. Second, does it matter if there is such a duty anyway? Even when a union wins election and becomes the exclusive representative, the employer often refuses to sign the first contract. What matters is whether the union is able to disrupt. It may be easier for a key group of 30 percent to disrupt for two or three hours every week than to get a 100 percent walkout for six or seven months.

At the same time, it would be illegal for that 30 percent to negotiate for everybody else. But in the 1930s, as labor-law expert Charles Morris has pointed out, the first labor contracts applied only to union members. Naturally, if the employer didn't extend those benefits to all, the others would join the union.

As the Chattanooga case shows, more in labor are thinking seriously about this approach. But this requires a different kind of labor movement—one that is not living off compulsory dues or even a fair share from everyone at work, but is getting its money from a more militant few. Instead of bargaining for 6.6 percent of the private sector, we'd bargain directly or indirectly for up to 30 percent or more. We would have to work a lot harder, even if we could reach more people. And the money might not be there for the researchers, staffers and lawyers (like me) in the relatively secure way it was before. But this new movement could spread across the country and mobilize millions of workers who have never heard of organized labor.

If we can mobilize that many people, our chances of changing the political and corporate models will be much stronger. We would be a big step closer to the goal that the great American philosopher John Dewey set for us: to extend everywhere and as far as we can a democratic way of life. **150th**

POETRY ARCHIVE

March 15, 1947

Varick Street

Elizabeth Bishop

At night the factories
struggle awake,
wretched uneasy buildings
veined with pipes
attempt their work.
Trying to breathe
the elongated nostrils
haired with spikes
give off such stenches, too.
And I shall sell you sell you
sell you of course, my dear, and you'll sell me.

On certain floors
certain wonders.
Pale dirty light,
some captured iceberg
being prevented from melting.
See the mechanical moons,
sick, being made
to wax and wane
at somebody's instigation.
And I shall sell you sell you
sell you of course, my dear, and you'll sell me.

Lights music of love
work on. The presses
print calendars
I suppose, the moons
make medicine
or confectionary. Our bed
shrinks from the soot
and the hapless odors
hold us close.
And I shall sell you sell you
sell you of course, my dear, and you'll sell me.

Haiti: The Devil's Bargain

A state doesn't fail because of some fault of its people. A state fails because of its history.

AMY WILENTZ

HOW DOES A STATE FAIL?

It's a question you can't help asking yourself as you make your way in Haiti, through the chaos left by four severe tropical storms in 2008 and the destruction wrought by the 2010 earthquake—some of which is still evident on the streets of Port-au-Prince today, five years later. It's not just the unrebuilt infrastructure that raises this question, but also the human and political waste caused by so many years of corrupting collaboration with the United States, the United Nations and outside nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

A state doesn't fail because of some innate inferiority in its people. I make this obvious point only because people who don't know Haiti often try, as subtly as they know how, to claim this is the case. They're wrong: a state fails because of its history.

Haiti from its inception has been a peculiarly globalized entity. The slavery with which the French colony enriched itself was a global labor and agricultural phenomenon, bringing people from Africa to the Americas in order to serve as free labor on plantations owned by Europeans. Haiti's revolution, too, was a global phenomenon, linking those same continents. Haiti's early debt was global; its economics under slavery and, later, the US occupation were global as well—and still are.

Many readers of *The Nation* may know something of the remarkable history of this country, since the magazine has been following it for more than a century. But for those of you coming to it cold: Haiti had unbelievably promising beginnings. Though tarnished by centuries of slavery, the country was the creation of some of the great geniuses of the 1700s. But the enormous potential of these singular men was destroyed by France, which kidnapped and killed some of Haiti's ablest leaders, most notably Toussaint Louverture. In 1825, a scant two decades after Haitian independence was declared, France demanded an indemnity of 150 million francs (roughly estimated at $20 billion in today's dollars) for the property lost by French plantation owners during the quite bloody, quite fiery revolution—one that Haiti had won.

> **France, in collusion with the United States, continued to bleed Haiti until all of its colonial and related debts were finally paid off—in 1947!**

Haiti was to compensate France not only for lost plantation lands and crops, but also for the loss of the Haitians themselves—i.e., for the right to be masters of their own bodies—since Haitian slaves had been France's most valuable Caribbean asset. France backed up this demand with the threat of a full-blown blockade, and Haiti agreed to pay in exchange for France's recognition. As a result, France duly recognized Haiti as an independent country (the United States, still a slave-owning nation and too geographically close for its own comfort, did not do so until 1862, in the midst of the Civil War). The huge debt payments were delivered assiduously by the Haitian government with money borrowed—conveniently—from French banks. Haiti also paid the interest on those loans in a timely fashion.

These reparations to France depleted Haiti's already starved coffers and led to repeated financial crises within the country. They also led to privations, to an inability to develop domestically and to political instability—indeed, political turmoil, with presidents entering and leaving office sometimes biannually. France, in collusion with the United States, continued to bleed Haiti until all of the related debts were finally paid off—in 1947!

This is how Haiti began to be a failed state.

France was not the only country to force Haiti down the road to failure. In 1909, US financiers began to lay the groundwork for an American occupation of Haiti. It was around that time that the National City Bank, based in New York, acquired a stake in Haiti's central bank and created a railway to support American exploitation of Haitian resources, especially cheap labor (a little more expensive than out-and-out slavery, but…) and a variety of agricultural products for American consumption, such as sugar (and, later, the industrial production of baseballs and women's undergarments). As Graham Greene wrote in *The Comedians*, his novel about Haiti in the 1960s: "It is astonishing how much money can be made out of the poorest of the poor with a little ingenuity."

There was never any real excuse for the occupation. Haiti was unstable, the Americans said, after a sitting president was dragged from the French Embassy by a mob and killed; shortly after, the Marines descended. Well, Haiti had been unstable for years. The occupation was simply a mechanism to control Haiti while American businesses sucked value out of the country and made sure nationals of other countries could not. A year after the occupation's end, Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler, the Marine Corps officer in charge of establishing and securing control, wrote: "I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism…. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in."

Nothing that the occupation built was meant to benefit Haitians. As Ernest H. Gruening wrote in 1922 in this very magazine: "nobody, be he ever so kindly and human, can wholly transmute a military Occupation into a lawn party." During the nineteen-year occupation, periodic rebellions and uprisings were brutally put down by the Marines. Finally, in 1929, another massacre of Haitians provoked a review of the occupation by Congress, as well as an eventual pullout in 1934.

Nineteen years of occupation left enduring scars on Haitian society. The racism and segregation enforced by the Marines led directly to the reactionary black-power rhetoric employed by François "Papa Doc" Duvalier as he rose to power in Haiti. The brutality and kleptocratic behavior of Duvalier's administration, while not unknown in pre-occupation Haiti, had been honed to a fine point under the Americans' regime. The nightmarish Duvalier and his corrupt son and successor, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc"), fertilized the terrain on which Haiti as a failed state would grow.

ViVE LA NOUVE
Haiti

BETTMANN / CORBIS / AP

Haiti has never existed in a vacuum. In fact, Haiti today is a creation of the world, its failures often purposefully molded by outsiders, though almost always in collusion with the Haitian elite, who stand to profit from these failures. In this, it is not dissimilar to other corrupt countries with a history of colonial exploitation.

Here is a contemporary example of how this works: under Bill Clinton, Haiti's leaders were pressured to reduce the country's longstanding tariffs on imported food (including rice) from 50 percent to about 3 percent. The United States then began dumping cheap, taxpayer-subsidized surplus rice on the Haitian market, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons, but actually so that it could dispose of an otherwise unsellable product.

Clinton's policy was brilliant and double-edged. The Haitian politician who had to approve it was none other than the overthrown Jean-Bertrand Aristide, arguably the first freely elected president of Haiti. Aristide had been ousted in 1991, less than a year after his election, while George H.W. Bush (Papa Bush) looked the other way. Doubtless in return for Aristide's acceptance of the lower tariff, as well as for other promises made, Clinton returned him to power. But once back in the National Palace, Aristide saw his authority undermined by the havoc and unrest that this very policy was causing in the countryside. The cheaper US rice undercut and effectively destroyed Haitian rice farming. A country that was largely self-sufficient in this staple in the 1980s was importing 80 percent of its rice by 2012.

So if Haiti can no longer feed itself, is this because it is a failed state? Haitians have rarely been fat, but the food crisis and food dependency began when weak Haitian leaders agreed to open the country's markets to predatory global forces. This is the ugly face of "free trade."

The crisis in rice farming also initiated a huge flow of rural people to the capital, because rice cultivators and their families could no longer survive in the countryside. The resulting overpopulation of the capital was a factor in the large number of people killed in the 2010 earthquake. After the quake, Clinton—by then the UN special envoy to Haiti, helping to run the reconstruction effort—apologized to the Haitian people. "It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake," he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2010. "I have to live every day with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people because of what I did; nobody else." He has called the policy a "devil's bargain." Nonetheless, imports of subsidized American rice only increased after the earthquake. Haiti imports as much as 50 percent of its food now, mostly from the United States. Today, Haiti is the second-biggest importer of US rice in the world.

As Graham Greene wrote in *The Comedians*, his novel about Haiti: "It is astonishing how much money can be made out of the poorest of the poor with a little ingenuity."

Now let's look at politics. In 1991, Aristide was overthrown. In 1994, Bill Clinton reinstated him. Aristide served out his truncated five-year term and was elected president once more in 2000, only to be overthrown again, in 2004, this time under Baby Bush (George W.).

For seven years after that second coup, Aristide lived in US-imposed exile in South Africa. He was allowed back into Haiti only in 2011, when President Obama, given various factors, could no longer reasonably prevent his return.

Though Aristide was, for at least two decades, the overwhelming choice of the Haitian people, his support has dissipated in the chaos caused by two antidemocratic coups and a barrage of natural disasters, as well as the generational shift that has come with new voters who simply don't remember him. Even so, the current Haitian president, a conservative Duvalierist who is another puppet of the United States, has recently put Aristide under illegal house arrest, fearing his potential as a disrupter as Haiti begins the long-overdue slog to a new round of elections.

That Haitian president is Michel Martelly, a pop singer whose slender victory in 2011 was engineered with the collusion of the United States, the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS). With his pro-business stance, Martelly is a lot more to the liking of American corporate interests in Haiti than Aristide. Among his greatest achievements as president: diverting earthquake-relief money to help extend and modernize transportation in northern Haiti, far from the earthquake's path, as well as expanding the incentives to seduce low-wage light industry to Haiti (mainly in the north) and freeing up gold-, silver- and copper-mining contracts for giant multinational extraction companies to begin excavating (also in the north).

Is the failure of the democratic experiment in Haiti the fault of a people who cannot govern themselves? No, it's the fault of outside interests and their Haitian collaborators, who together continue to hold the reins of power in Haiti.

The food crisis began when weak Haitian leaders agreed to open the country's markets to predatory global forces. This is the ugly face of "free trade."

By the way, I don't mean to suggest that Aristide was democracy personified. He was flawed, but so what? Let's put it this way: unlike Aristide, the Duvaliers—both Papa Doc and Baby Doc—were grotesque violators of free speech, honest elections and human rights, but still they managed, in the shadow of the United States, not to be overthrown for almost thirty years. Aristide, in that same shadow (Haiti hasn't moved!), was overthrown within eight months of taking office, and then overthrown a second time. This is not about a state's failure; it's about failure imposed on a state.

Let's also consider corruption, another symptom of failed states. Many say the Haitian government is disorganized, but no one is fooled: actually, the Haitian kleptocracy has been carefully organized—especially during the occupation—to be porous and incompetent, to *allow* for corruption. It exists to feed those politicians who kowtow to outside interests. It is a mechanism into which money is poured and then siphoned off. The Duvaliers merely perfected what the occupation handed down.

Since 1915, the United States has treated Haitian governments as, at best, rubber stamps for US policy, American businesses working in Haiti, and Haitian-run businesses friendly to American interests. For almost the entire twentieth century, only US-approved Haitians could be president. The embassy looked the other way at internal political repression, to say nothing of continuing starvation in the countryside, as long as Haitian governments were friendly—or at least anticommunist, like Papa Doc's. Any leader who seemed to have an agenda that put the Haitian people first was thrown out, including Daniel Fignolé, a wildly popular political figure who was in office less than a month in 1957, shortly before the Duvalier dictatorship; and, of course, Aristide, who slipped in during a moment of change in Haiti and the world (post-Duvalier and post–Cold War, respectively) but was quickly sent packing.

Ever since Aristide was deposed for the second time, in 2004, there has been another occupation of Haiti, this time by the United Nations. A decade later, some 7,000 international military and police personnel still operate from the huge, modern UN Logistics Base near the airport (which is no longer named for François Duvalier but for Louverture, another coup victim sent summarily overseas). From "Log Base," as it is called, peacekeepers have been sent out to quell dissent, resulting in many casualties. They've rounded up the discontented, and they've developed informants within progressive and popular movements. They ride around town in casual pickup trucks with gunners in the back, facing the trailing traffic.

All of this is done with the ostensible motivation of protecting the Haitian people and keeping things secure. As *The Nation*'s Gruening wrote concerning the Marine occupation in 1922: "this proceeds under the guise of benevolence…. Colonel Russell [the head of the occupation at the time] told me that it was the two million Haitian country people that he wanted to help, and that he was very fond of them but [that he was] against the 'three hundred agitators in Port au Prince….' The Occupation's affection for the Haitian proletariat is truly touching. Obviously if the [agitators are] eliminated, the most docile and the cheapest labor supply that a concessionaire ever dreamed of will be easily available. Twenty cents a day is the current Haitian wage." Today, thanks to the machinations of American businesspeople in Haiti and colluding legislators in Washington, the minimum wage has been kept low: to less than $5 a *day*. Haitians' 1922 pay comes to roughly $2.82 in today's dollars. So, in ninety-three years, the value of a Haitian's labor has increased by little more than $2.

One final problem must be understood in picking apart the failure of the Haitian state, and that is the overwhelming presence in Haiti—especially in Port-au-Prince and in Cap-Haïtien—of nongovernmental organizations, usually foreign-based. Unscientific estimates suggest there are some 10,000 NGOs operating in a country smaller than Maryland and with a population of 10 million.

These NGOs, each with its own projects, don't operate under any kind of umbrella; nor are they truly regulated. What they do, unintentionally, is substitute their own services for the services that a government should provide. They prop up the kleptocratic state, a mechanism for the distribution of corruption. Over the years, the United States has spent billions through the Agency for Inter-

TESTIMONIALS

US SENATOR

BERNIE SANDERS

Despite *The Nation*'s long and distinguished history, this magazine has never played a more important role than it does today. At a time when a handful of huge media conglomerates own and control what we see, hear and read, *The Nation* has filled the information void by focusing attention on the major issues that the corporate media downplays or ignores. *The Nation* has been in the forefront analyzing the collapse of the middle class, exposing the obscene level of wealth and income inequality in this country, and opposing Supreme Court decisions that allow billionaires to buy elections and subvert American democracy. *The Nation* has been loud and clear about the need to reverse the planetary crisis of global warming and make sure our children live on an Earth that is habitable. What I love about *The Nation* is that, decade after decade, it continues the fight for a vibrant democracy, and social, economic and environmental justice for all.

national Development, a principal funder of NGOs, in an attempt to "develop" Haiti—and has achieved effectively nothing. A report by the World Bank on its own role in Haiti from 1986 through 2002 stated that "the outcome of the [World Bank] assistance program is rated unsatisfactory (if not highly so), the institutional development impact, negligible, and the sustainability of the few benefits that have accrued, unlikely."

The end of Haiti, its utter ruin, has been predicted since the state was declared in 1804. The outside world believed a country run by former slaves could never survive; Haitians looked around and sometimes agreed. In 1944, the legendary Haitian novelist Jacques Roumain published *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (Masters of the Dew), set in a deforested, drought-plagued landscape. When I first arrived in Haiti in 1986, the environmental end of the country was already considered imminent. Everyone would starve and die; AIDS, too, was about to take its toll.

Today, Haiti is still deforested, the environment abused and ignored. Much of this has to do with dire poverty and government negligence, as well as foreign and domestic exploitation. But in spite of deforestation and drought, despite mudslides and hurricanes and earthquakes, despite the destruction of rice cultivation, the collapse of Haiti's sugar industry, the neglect of its coffee cultivators, the ongoing crisis of AIDS, tuberculosis and, now, cholera—Haitians survive.

Is this because they have a special resilience, that "dignity in poverty" that visitors like to rattle on about? Nope. It's because the situation has been so bad for so long that almost every tiny Haitian village has sent at least one person out of the country into the huge diaspora, and those wanderers (equal to about 20 percent of the on-island population) have been sending their dutiful remittances back, even over generations. This immense brain drain has adversely affected *everything* on the island, but it has also been crucial to Haiti's survival as a failed state.

Many small, formerly agricultural countries survive this way in the globalized world. The Philippines is another good example: its government, like Haiti's, provides few services and little employment for its growing population, and instead sends its people out to participate in a global economy from which, although poorly paid by employers abroad, they can send home enough money to keep people alive on the islands. Sri Lanka, Vietnam and many other countries survive in a similar fashion.

Living off such remittances, those who still reside in the home country are less likely to find themselves at that edge of desperation where political organization and unrest become urgent and necessary. Grassroots change is abortive or endlessly deferred, a situation that is much preferred by the small local elite, which provides nothing and thereby gains everything. Haiti's ongoing crisis is the product of global forces, and only huge, unlikely changes in international behaviors—especially on the part of the biggest, most abusive nations and organizations—will allow the Haitians themselves to turn things around. **150th**

Engendered: Beyond the Binary

The transgender movement is coming out—and bringing with it a deeper understanding of what it means to be human.

MARK GEVISSER

MONA IN CAIRO HAS THREE FACEBOOK PROFILES: A HETEROSEXUAL male one for her family and school friends, who know her only as "Abdul"; a heterosexual female one, through which she can explore being a woman; and a transgender one, through which she can interact with the online community that she has found of people like her. Mona also discovered a black-market source for estrogen online; however, her changing appearance began to attract hostile responses on the city's streets, and some of the elders in the gay community prevailed upon her to limit her transgender explorations to her room and her webcam.

In a poor Chennai neighborhood, an enterprising transgender woman named Lalitha Yogi has set up the "Mermaid Studio" in her room; people from all over India come here to experiment with being transgender online. Charlotte Wolf, a young transgender woman from Ann Arbor, Michigan, developed her female self when she took on female avatars in massively multiplayer online role-playing games. I have met transgender people in the US who began researching gender transition by watching YouTube videos online before puberty, and who now post bulletins of their own transitions online.

Things are tougher in other parts of the world. In Syria, the Assad regime monitors gay websites and uses the intelligence it gathers against gay Syrians; similarly, Israel attempts to blackmail gay Palestinians into being collaborators. Jerome, a teenager who had to flee his home in western Uganda at the age of 15 when he was discovered with another boy, used Facebook to find other gay people; among the men he found online was a gang that entrapped, tortured and extorted him. He fled to Kenya, where he is now a refugee. In early February, he said he was arrested with thirty-one other Ugandan queer refugees while attending a party celebrating the successful resettlement of one refugee. He was held for two days and alleges he was tortured.

When it comes to gender identity, the world is changing faster than anyone could have imagined.

Beyoncé is a teenager from a provincial Egyptian town. When his parents discovered his double life, they shaved his head and dragged him through town behind a horse cart before locking him in his room for a month, beating him every day. He kept himself alive by posting "It Gets Better" videos on YouTube advising other young people in similar situations. Lena Klimova, a young journalist in the Urals, has set up a website called Children-404, which does the same thing for Russian youth that LGBT organizations can no longer reach because of the country's legislation forbidding "gay propaganda."

When it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity, the world is changing faster than anyone could have imagined: not only because of the global rights movement, but because of the digital and information revolutions too. Researching a book, I have recently met young people in countries all over the world who are finding communities—and new identities—online, and then attempting to square those with the often more challenging environments of their offline lives.

In some places, such as Uganda and Russia, these changes have triggered social crises, as the state and the church push back against young people demanding a set of individual rights that are branded as Western and foreign. In other parts of the world, homosexuality has become, as the title of the TV sitcom would have it, “the new normal.” And not only in the “blue states” of the Global North: Latin America has been especially remarkable in its shift from Catholic social conservatism to a new moral code; Vietnam has made moves toward marriage equality. As of this writing, thirty-seven American states now permit same-sex marriage, and a Republican Party report has suggested it needs to soften its stance on gay marriage or risk losing its young supporters.

A new generation of young people rejects the notion of a binary gender system altogether and describes itself as “genderqueer” or “gender neutral.”

Meanwhile, a whole new frontier is being established, particularly in the United States: from Laverne Cox to Chelsea Manning, transgender people are coming out. Last year, *Time* identified a moment in American culture by putting Cox, the glamorous and talented star of *Orange Is the New Black*, on its cover with the title “The Transgender Tipping Point.” Increasingly, in the United States, young people declare themselves to be “trans” in their teens. The confluence of a new transgender-rights culture with the information revolution and biomedical advances has also triggered a dramatic spike in children who transition to the other gender well before puberty.

This in itself is drawing radical critique. One critique comes, perhaps predictably, from those radical feminists who insist on the category of “women-born women”: some rad-fems see transgender men as sellouts to the patriarchy, and transgender women as beneficiaries of male privilege because they were born with a penis. But there’s a different critique increasing from another quarter, too: a critique not so much of transgenderism itself as of the kind of gender polarity that says if you are not male, you must be female, and vice versa. A new generation of young people—privileged and generally from liberal environments, to be sure—rejects the notion of a binary gender system altogether and describes itself as “genderqueer” or “agender” or “gender neutral,” often choosing to use the pronoun “they” or “ze” rather than “he” or “she.”

The “genderqueer” movement is growing so dramatically that at some liberal-arts colleges, gatherings now often begin with a go-round of names and “preferred pronouns,” and some students have started to refer to any stranger as “they.” A slew of new words has entered the youth lexicon. Many young people choose to refer to themselves as “pansexual” rather than “gay” or “straight” or even “bisexual”—the last, of course, being a binarist notion to begin with. “LGBT” became “LGBTI” to include “intersex,” which is a medical rather than a social definition, but young people have expanded the acronym to such an extent that Riot Youth, a group I am working with in Ann Arbor, Michigan, calls itself “LGBTQQAA”: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* (with the asterisk), queer, questioning, asexual and allies. The categories are proliferating and exploding gender binarism: Jay, a high-school kid from a rural town near Ann Arbor, told me that he was a “demiboy”: “half male and half something else.” He doesn’t know what that “something else” is, and he doesn’t particularly care.

Alex Kulick, an early Riot Youth graduate who became a facilitator there, told me that when he joined seven years ago, all the kids identified themselves as “gay” or “lesbian.” Now, almost nobody does: some of them are “trans,” but most are “queer.” The number of kids who come to Riot Youth has increased, Kulick says, “perhaps because Riot Youth attracts students who are not getting the resources they need in school. Gay teens might be getting some of that support, but there’s definitely still a strong need among queer and trans youth.”

Sean Jacobi, who recently graduated from high school in Ann Arbor, was “assigned female at birth,” as the trans parlance puts it, but uses the “they” pronoun. “There are as many genders as there are people in the world,” Sean told me, “because there is no one way of being male or being female.” It follows, then, that every sexual pairing or sexual attraction is its own unique category.

“SEX,” ACCORDING TO A POPULAR ADAGE IN the trans community, is what’s between our legs, while “gender” is what’s between our ears. “Sexuality” is what we do with our clothes off, while “gender expression” is what we do with our clothes. “Sexual orientation” is who we get into bed with, while “gender identity” is who we get into bed *as*. If the women’s movement helped us understand gender as a construct, then the transgender movement is helping us understand that it is not necessarily fixed at birth.

Herb Schreier, a pioneering child psychiatrist who specializes in gender at the UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in Oakland, told me about a 7-year-old patient who has been flip-flopping for three years between being a boy and a girl. Then the kid went off to a transgender summer camp and came back with an announcement: “Mommy, at last I think I know what I am—I’m a *they*.” Schreier, a heterosexual man in his 70s, points to the success of gay rights as an example: “Who would have imagined a generation ago that two men or two women could marry and make a family? In the generation to come, we’re going to look back at gender and say, ‘Oh, that binary stuff—we’re over it, thank God!’”

Is Herb Schreier right? Is Sean the future?

In liberal America, gay people can join the army, run corporations, get married, have kids, host TV talk-shows. In this context, little wonder that there was no conflict in Sean’s family over sexuality. But when his quest for self-expression drifted into gender identity, the generational lines were drawn. Sitting in on a meeting of the families of transgender kids while on my trip, I watched an otherwise-supportive father explode over the use of pronouns: “It makes no sense, and it’s too complicated! Every kid in my son’s social group wants to be called a different pronoun. How can I possibly remember? And if you get it wrong, it’s like you’re denying their very identity!”

He has a point. But it is reductive to see genderqueer kids as being overly demanding, spoiling for a fight with

TESTIMONIALS

DAVID DINKINS

FORMER MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY

The Nation has been a tireless advocate for the progressive voice since its founding right here in New York City in 1865. Distinguished writers and intellectuals like Langston Hughes, Howard Zinn, W.E.B. Du Bois, I.F. Stone and too many others to name have contributed their unrivaled insights into the pressing issues of the day. From the need for civil-service reform during the Gilded Age, to the expansion of social programs in the decades following World War II, to the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela in 1962 and his subsequent release twenty-seven years later, *The Nation* has illuminated these issues and promoted important writers long before widespread recognition brought them to the forefront of the national consciousness.

Throughout its 150 years, *The Nation* has endured as "the flagship of the left" and has served as a beacon for those dedicated to the promotion of liberal ideals—even as other periodicals have shut down production. I have no doubt that as a new wave of progressivism sweeps across New York City and the country as a whole, *The Nation* will continue to adhere to its principles and launch the kinds of essential conversations that have earned it its place as the iconic progressive American publication. May *The Nation* continue this fine work for 150 more years.

adults or simply "going through a phase." Rather, they are finding room for individuation from their parents, as well as engaging in the rebellion that is a key component of youth culture. This is an impulse that germinated not only the hippies and punks, but feminists and gay liberationists too. Many of the genderqueer kids in today's liberal America are what Charlotte Wolf calls "transtrenders," using gender as a form of social provocation or subcultural bonding. The majority may later marry and assume the conventional gender roles, much as Japanese boys become company men after being allowed their very structured anime rebellion. But an increasing number will stay in the borderlands and, in so doing, redraw our gender frontiers—and with them, the patriarchy itself.

An increasing number of today's genderqueer kids will stay in the borderlands and, in so doing, redraw our gender frontiers—and with them, the patriarchy itself.

SINCE ALFRED KINSEY, WESTERN CULTURE HAS become comfortable with what Adrienne Rich called "the lesbian continuum": the fluidity of specifically female sexual orientation. But gender fluidity is potentially more troubling in this biomedical age because of the irrevocability of hormone treatment and surgery. Rose became Fynn and identified as male while in high school, and began taking testosterone as a freshman at Reed College. But when her girlfriend told her she was not eligible to join a campus women's group because she was now male, she realized she was not happy with her new masculinity. "I think I needed to become a man to realize I was a woman," Rose told me. She worries that adolescents "don't necessarily have the mental capacity to understand the misogyny in our culture that might be informing their decisions. I certainly didn't."

Still, Rose loves her deep voice and facial hair, a consequence of her year on testosterone, and she is still considering having her breasts removed, as some other butch lesbians have done. In the Bay Area, where she now lives, body modifications such as tattooing and piercing define hipster culture today, in much the same way that long hair defined hippie culture forty years ago. She is the child of a *Nip/Tuck* world in which cosmetic surgery is increasingly common, a *Twilight* world in which digitally enhanced bodies are perpetually in flux.

"Where is it written that women have to have breasts?" Rose asks. The very notion of gender determination through reproductive capacity is up for grabs. Thanks to advances in fertility technology and the social acceptance of surrogate pregnancies, the species *Homo sapiens* no longer requires the coupling of a man and a woman to ensure its survival. It has been half a century since Kinsey helped us understand that there are very few people who are 100 percent heterosexual or homosexual. If the feminist movement of the late twentieth century taught us that there are many ways to be a woman (or a man), today's transgender movement is helping us to understand that there are many people who are not 100 percent male or female—and in that labeling way of our culture, we are developing a lexicon to cover all the possibilities.

TO BE SURE, AN EMBRACE OF TRANSGENDERISM and its possibilities might perversely serve to reinforce the binary: if you have a son whose identity falls outside the box of conventional masculinity, you can solve your "problems" by turning him into a girl; your sissy-boy can become a princess. The extreme example of this is Iran, where homosexuality is illegal but gender transition is legal and subsidized by the government. And evidence suggests that the government pressures some gay people to undergo gender-reassignment surgery.

But according to the more sophisticated gender specialists (admittedly, more likely to be found in the Bay Area or the Northeast than in the American heartland), only a small number of gender-nonconforming children are actually transgender: many more "gender-creative" children, as the Oakland-based psychologist Diane Ehrensaft puts it, are "protogay." Once you open up the Pandora's box of gender and begin to understand it as a construct, you have to allow for the existence of what kids today are calling "queerness": a continuum of gender identities across a spectrum with many possibilities.

Medicine is developing a deeper understanding of epigenetics, or the way our genes are triggered by our contexts. As society advances, we will inevitably develop more sophisticated measures for the very different and individual ways that our environmental contexts—including the intrauterine environment—blend our genes and hormones. There will always be some people whose physical features are determined primarily by estrogen, and others primarily by testosterone, but does it necessarily follow that all of the former will feel themselves to be women and all of the latter will feel themselves to be men? And with the ready availability of cross-gender hormones and, increasingly, surgery, the possibilities—for better and for worse—of modifying our bodies to suit the way we feel about ourselves increase too. As the psychoanalyst Virginia Goldner puts it: "My body is no longer my destiny. It is now my canvas." **150th**

THE Nation. 150

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WHY WE CAN'T WAIT

As The Nation *looks forward to the next 150 years, we asked some young people in our orbit what a radical future looks like to them. The following are from contributors to StudentNation, the campus-oriented section of our site, and former* Nation *interns. You can read more submissions at TheNation.com.*

Chloe Maxmin

Senior, Harvard College, and StudentNation contributor

I AM 22 YEARS OLD, AND I HAVE BEEN A CLIMATE ACTIVIST for ten years. My call is for a radical future now.

I look into my future, and I am scared. I know that climate change will define my life no matter what. I also know that this is true for everyone on our planet, especially the global poor on the front lines of fossil-fuel use.

Meanwhile, millions of people around the world unite to protect what they love. We insist on new institutions that respond to the climate crisis, enabling humans to prosper within Earth's limits. We fight for a government that sees beyond short-term self-interest.

This future embodies different values that enable the turn away from a carbon economy and address root causes of the crisis. Equity, justice, life and empathy are at the core. Perhaps we can never fully achieve these values. Knowing that does not diminish their necessity. We must learn to value one another and our Earth in a different way.

If we relegate new values to an abstract, theoretical future, then they will always remain there. In the future. My radical *now* tries to bring this new moral framework into the present. Wave to the car that lets you cross the street; wave more vigorously at those choosing to take buses and trains to work; reach out to a friend whom you haven't seen in a while; listen to all the voices in the room. The big things are equally important: create fiery campaigns that allow for all interests and levels of involvement; build a movement driven by “love for” not “fear of.” What we love can’t wait for the future.

George Joseph

Junior, Columbia University, education reporter and StudentNation contributor

The struggle over “education reform” in this country is a last stand. Public education is one of the last great public assets in this country, not to mention one of labor’s last strongholds. Having taken almost everything else, Wall Street investors–turned–“education reformers” are increasingly looking to loot our community schools.

America’s public education system has always been rife with inequality, segregation and top-down management. But public schools have also historically been sites of community organizing and mobilization. At its best, public education has gone beyond mere job training, pushing students to work with each other to imagine a fairer, more equitable world. Thus it is not surprising that in schools being cut to the bone, from Chicago to Philadelphia to Newark, students are walking out and rising up.

These students are fighting so that the generation after them will know what it means to have recess, to discuss topics that may never appear on a standardized test, to engage in a truly democratic process. This struggle over “education reform” will determine whether students should be shaped into human capital or should shape themselves into active democratic agents. We cannot afford to lose.

Nikhil Goyal

Student at Goddard College, author of a forthcoming book on learning for Doubleday and StudentNation contributor

We want to one day live in a country that is not at war, occupying foreign lands, overthrowing democracies, bankrolling apartheid states and dropping bombs on civilians in the name of “protecting our freedoms.” We want to live in a country where poverty, hunger and homelessness are extinct. We want to live in a country that distributes wealth more equally. We want to live in a country that puts an end to mass incarceration of and police brutality against people of color. We want to live in a country with a public education system that is not based on coercion and control, but freedom, trust and autonomy.

We want free higher education. We want a universal basic income, so we can “have a life.” We want climate justice. We want affordable housing and healthcare. We want more worker cooperatives.

Our only chance at such a future is if we put our “bodies upon the gears,” as the late activist Mario Savio once declared—engage in organized resistance. This change cannot solely happen in the halls of Congress, the courts or at the ballot box.

My peers are primed for this struggle. Many of us have been the catalysts behind Ferguson, Occupy, Fight for 15, People’s Climate March and United We Dream. We will never stop dreaming and organizing and marching for a better world.

Lily Defriend

PhD student at New York University, organizer with GSOC-UAW, the union that represents NYU’s graduate students, and StudentNation contributor

Private institutions like NYU depend upon the ready, available pool of highly skilled graduate workers who carry out world-class teaching and industry-standard research throughout the duration of their studies. At NYU’s Polytechnic School of Engineering, hailed as the “Silicon Valley of the East Coast,” graduate workers earn as little as $10 an hour, with no benefits, conducting work in projects that help bring NYU around $20 million a year in grants. Years of organizing have yielded innumerable stories of workers who sleep on floors in laboratories, forgo essential medical treatments, are forced to live apart from their families. These are no longer temporary sacrifices by students on the way to attaining degrees. Such privation increasingly constitutes the permanent condition of academic labor. Institutions like NYU seek global expan-

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After the New Atheist Debate
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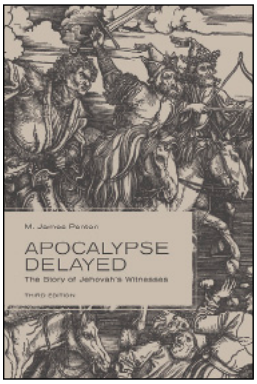
AFTER THE NEW ATHEIST DEBATE
PHIL RYAN

What is the place of religion in modern society? Phil Ryan moves past the overheated rhetoric favoured by the New Atheists including Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens and their critics and presents a path out of the cul-de-sac that this argument has become.

Apocalypse Delayed
The Story of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Third Edition
by M. James Penton



In *Apocalypse Delayed,* James Penton, a former member of the sect, presents a fascinating history of Jehovah’s Witnesses and discusses controversies within this religious movement including its opposition to military service and blood transfusions.

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POETRY ARCHIVE

June 22, 1946

The Injury

William Carlos Williams

From this hospital bed
I can hear an engine
breathing—somewhere
in the night:

—Soft coal, soft coal,
soft coal!

And I know it is men
breathing
shoveling, resting—

—Go about it
the slow way, if you can
find any way—
Christ!
who's a bastard?
—quit
and quit shoveling.

A man beathing
and it quiets and
the puff of steady
work begins
slowly: Chug.
Chug. Chug. Chug . . .
fading off.
Enough coal at least
for this small job

Soft! Soft!
—enough for one small
engine, enough for that.

A man shoveling,
working and not lying here
in this
hospital bed—powerless
—with the white-throat
calling in the
poplars before dawn, his
faint flute-call,
triple tongued, piercing
the shingled curtain
of the new leaves;
drowned out by
car wheels
singing now on the rails,
taking the curve,
slowly,
a long wail,
high pitched:
rounding
the curve—

—the slow way because
(if you can find any
way) that is
the only way left now
for you.

sion based on a corporate business model, while low-wage workers uphold the core values of quality teaching and learning.

It took eight years to win back recognition of our union, GSOC-UAW, at NYU. We stayed organized and refused to back down—and in December 2013, we won! NYU is the only private university to have collective-bargaining rights for graduate employees, and our contract will set a precedent for other workers who face similar struggles. Having a union means we can demand better wages and benefits and recognition for the valuable work we do.

Tommy Raskin

Sophomore, Amherst College, and StudentNation contributor

The late conservative intellectual Russell Kirk argued that "the great line of division in modern politics" is "between all those who believe in some sort of transcendent moral order, on one side, and on the other side all those who take this ephemeral existence of ours for the be-all and end-all." Kirk specifically intended for a religious code to reign supreme, but his general framework is nonetheless useful in contrasting a much-needed human-rights politics with the amoral politics of nihilistic violence.

Although decent Americans across the political spectrum have long agreed that a meaningful "moral order" requires accountability for bullies who torture and kill the innocent, the American government has spent more than a century providing cover to human-rights abusers all over the world. Under both Democrats and Republicans, our government has cozied up to dictators like Suharto, whose murderous cleansing of East Timor is hardly a blip on most Americans' political radar, and General Pinochet, whose thugs brutalized, assassinated and raped innocent Chileans. At the School of the Americas, the Department of Defense instructed Argentines in the "art" of torture, and in Iraq, the American military apparatus collaborated with other Western powers to unleash chaos in a ruthless and illegal war.

If there is in fact an unyielding moral order, then respect for bodily integrity certainly defines it. In the radical future, we must use the political mechanisms available to us to stop state-sponsored torture and murder and to hold power brokers accountable for their complicity in gratuitous violence.

Crystal Kayiza

Senior, Ithaca College, Emmy Award–winning documentary filmmaker and former Nation *intern*

We've all heard the adage, those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. I've become a firm believer in the fullness of that truth—our future is dependent on reaching back. But in a society so heavily invested in the acceptance of its own brilliance and denial of its brutality, how do we create a future unlike our past? We are constantly told to observe the lessons of history in order to promote a more just and equal future, but many of us are torn between the legitimacy of our Constitution and the very visible contradictions in our communities. The idea that only the oppressed are on the losing side of our national narrative is the greatest myth of the American story. For too long, there has been a complete denial of the depths of our scars by those who wish to maintain a climate of complacency. But shackled hands wove the very fabric of our nation, and we can no longer ignore the wounds that provide our sense of freedom. To be radical, as Angela Davis

STUDENT NATION DISPATCHES

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has said, simply means grasping things at the root. And America's future belongs to those who are willing to dig.

Zoë Schlanger

Reporter for Newsweek *and former* Nation *intern*

DOES EVERY GENERATION FEEL LIKE the world is ending? Suddenly time scales are collapsing in on themselves. Geological time is becoming human time. The power plant is in your town, and now the global climate and your little brother's asthma have something in common. The sea is rising, the forests are burning, and we keep tripping over tipping points and shrugging, swallowing the latest lost species or UN report whole, swallowing hard, clearing our throats so we can move on. But what if we had the capacity to deal with a problem so huge? What if we—at the level of our politics, and at the level of our individual imaginations—were able to face this? What would enable a politics that genuinely addressed the health of the environment? What would it look like?

It would begin, I think, by reorienting the way we talk about our rights. Environmental pollutants (and indeed the environment itself) have a deep physicality—we ingest them in our food, we breathe them in—but the issue is presented as a political externality: something that we only feel in the abstract, through the cold detachment of party platforms and campaign speeches.

Does the protection of the environment require the invasion of our individual rights? Most of our Congress would say it does. But "invasion" and "rights" are woefully misaligned here; the environment already invades us. Our bodies are full of it.

Our culture of rights-language is a mixed inheritance: it stems from an anxiety about the role of the state—anything that might threaten individual autonomy is met with reflexive outrage. But "Don't Tread on Me" politics—democracy understood as the inalienable right to be left alone—leaves room, I think, for a more powerful form of environmental politics.

We may not have the cultural grammar to understand the environment in terms of reciprocity and stewardship, but insomuch as it clearly crosses the border

POETRY ARCHIVE

December 18, 1943

The Mind Is an Enchanting Thing

Marianne Moore

is an enchanted thing
like the glaze on a
katydid-wing
subdivided by sun
till the nettings are legion.
Like Gieseking playing Scarlatti;

like the apteryx-awl
as a beak, or the
kiwi's rain-shawl
of haired feathers, the mind
feeling its way as though blind,
walks along with its eyes on the ground.

It has memory's ear
that can hear without
having to hear.
Like the gyroscope's fall,
truly unequivocal
because trued by regnant certainty,

it is a power of
strong enchantment. It
is like the dove-
neck animated by
sun; it is memory's eye;
it's conscientious inconsistency.

It tears off the veil, tears
the temptation, the
mist the heart wears,
from its eyes—if the heart
has a face; it takes apart
dejection. It's fire in the dove-neck's

iridescence; in the
inconsistencies
of Scarlatti.
Unconfusion submits
its confusion to proof; it's
not a Herod's oath that cannot change.

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into our sovereign selves, it is our right, then, to ensure that the invader be pure, clean and in service to our health. Maybe, once we've embraced that, the scale of the problem might collapse back into something far more human. Something we can actually do something about.

Britney Wilson

Third-year law student at the University of Pennsylvania and former Nation *intern*

When I was first asked to contribute to this collection, I felt honored and unworthy. Then, I thought about my disappointment over Debo Adegbile's blocked nomination to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, and said to myself: "What are the possible professional ramifications of being featured in a section called 'Radical Futures'?" I especially wondered what those ramifications could be for a black woman. I thought about the connotations of the word "radical" and how that might lead people to categorize me in the future.

I was immediately ashamed. Such a thought was not characteristic of me at all. I had recently told a classmate not to worry about being viewed as the "angry black woman" when expressing her feelings over the Ferguson grand jury decision, because she was entitled to her opinions and emotions without having to manage other people's expectations. However, while momentarily weighing the consequences of being associated with the "radical future," I suddenly realized the subtle ways in which the prospect of entering the legal profession has changed me. I was forced to ask myself how a profession that I had seen as a vehicle for freedom and change had managed to make me feel constrained before I'd even entered it.

My friends tell me this realization is a normal concern of professionalism. They are young teachers and journalists and entrepreneurs who have said that they too are more wary of what they tweet or blog about. Still, I do not think that their concerns are the same as mine. There is a difference between managing your social-media presence and being afraid of having your views or career choices, or what may be characterized as your views or career choices, used against you as a strategy or a roadblock.

So, for me, a radical future for the legal system means one in which humanity is not a threat to order or justice. It is one where all people—professionals, citizens and noncitizens alike—feel free to be all aspects and degrees of who they are, with dignity, respect, access and opportunity—and most important, without fear or apology. **150th**

POETRY ARCHIVE

September 15, 2008

And We Love Life

Mahmoud Darwish

And we love life if we find a way to it.
We dance in between martyrs and raise a minaret for violet or palm trees.

We love life if we find a way to it.

And we steal from the silkworm a thread to build a sky and fence in this departure.
We open the garden gate for the jasmine to step out on the streets as a beautiful day.

We love life if we find a way to it.

And we plant, where we settle, some fast growing plants, and harvest the dead.
We play the flute like the color of the faraway, sketch over the dirt corridor a neigh.
We write our names one stone at a time, O lightning brighten the night.

We love life if we find a way to it…

(translated from the Arabic by Fady Joudah)

Contributors to This Issue

✍ **James Agee** (1909–1955) was *The Nation*'s film critic from 1942 to 1948. "In my opinion," W.H. Auden wrote of Agee in a letter to the editor, "his column is the most remarkable regular event in American journalism today." [p. 96]

✍ Active in the Algerian Revolution, the political scientist **Eqbal Ahmad** (1933–1999) was among the Harrisburg Seven, indicted but not convicted for planning to kidnap Henry Kissinger in 1971. "Ahmad was that rare thing," Edward Said wrote in a eulogy, "an intellectual unintimidated by power or authority." [p. 144]

✍ **Ai Weiwei** resided in the United States from 1981 to 1993, photographing New York and befriending Allen Ginsberg, who had met Ai's poet father in China years earlier. [p. 160]

Eric Alterman, a contributor since 1983, writes "The Liberal Media" column. His *Inequality and One City: Bill de Blasio and the New York Experiment*, *Year One* was published by eBookNation in February. [p. 18]

✍ **Paul Y. Anderson** (1893–1938) won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the Teapot Dome scandal for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He contributed pieces to *The Nation* from Washington roughly every two weeks from 1929 until his death. [p. 87]

✍ **Hannah Arendt**'s essay on the French existentialists was closely studied by J. Edgar Hoover for information about one "Albert Canus" [*sic*], whom the State Department and the FBI considered suspicious. Arendt (1906–1975) wrote several articles for *The Nation* while her friend Randall Jarrell was serving as interim literary editor. [p. 97]

The paintings and drawings of **Marshall Arisman**, chairman of the MFA program at the School of Visual Arts, are in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the National Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian Institution. His latest project is the autobiographical documentary *A Postcard From Lily Dale*. [pp. 152, 162 and 213]

✍ **W.H. Auden** (1907–1973) contributed many poems and critical essays to *The Nation* between 1938 and 1951. [p. 125]

✍ In 1947, *The Nation* published **James Baldwin**'s first article, a review of Maxim Gorky's short stories. Baldwin (1924–1987) continued contributing for more than three decades, and in the 1980s served on the magazine's editorial board. [p. 150]

✍ After spending much of 1919 imprisoned for refusing to submit to the wartime draft, **Roger Nash Baldwin** (1884–1981) founded and served as the first director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Katrina vanden Heuvel is his goddaughter. [p. 76]

✍ *The Nation* was one of the first major publications to print LeRoi Jones's work, including his 1964 essay on the fight between Cassius Clay and Sonny Liston. Jones (1934–2014) later changed his name to **Amiri Baraka**. [p. 223]

Moustafa Bayoumi, professor of English at Brooklyn College, has contributed to *The Nation* since 2005. He is the co-editor of *The Edward Said Reader* (2000) and author of *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America* (2008). [p. 132]

✍ **Carleton Beals** (1893–1979) reported for *The Nation* on international affairs, from the rise of fascism in postwar Italy to the Cuban Revolution of 1959. In 1928, he made headlines around the world for his five-part series "With Sandino in Nicaragua"; he was the first foreign journalist to interview the guerrilla leader. [p. 106]

Walden Bello, a *Nation* contributor since 1976, was until 2015 a member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines. An earlier version of this piece ran on teleSUR. [p. 112]

✍ **Bernard Berenson** (1865–1959) was a critic and connoisseur whose first writing on art was published in *The Nation* in 1890. Sixty years later, he wrote a letter to Ray Bradbury complimenting his essay on science fiction. The essay is reprinted in this issue. [p. 34]

✍ Born in present-day Slovakia, political cartoonist **Oscar Berger** (1901–1977) fled Germany upon Hitler's rise to power and resettled in London. He designed posters for the London transit system and, after the war, specialized in caricatures of heads of state. [pp. 101 and 106]

✍ **Marshall Berman** (1940–2013), longtime professor of political science at CUNY, was the author of *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982). [p. 169]

✍ **Wendell Berry** is a poet, activist and farmer whose writings—including the poem "November 26, 1963," after the death of President John F. Kennedy—have appeared in *The Nation* for decades. [p. 145]

✍ **John Berryman** (1914–1972) wrote five essays and eight poems for *The Nation* between

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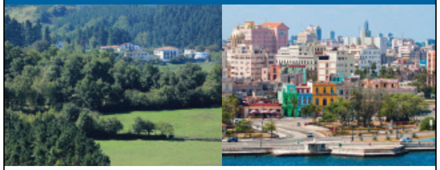

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1935 and 1970. One month after the last poem was published, he sent a letter to the editor noting the "unremitting hostility" of an unfriendly review by "this bastard," Hayden Carruth. [p. 196]

Kai Bird is a Pulitzer Prize–winning historian and a *Nation* contributing editor. He was a staff editor from 1978 to 1982 and later a columnist. His latest book is *The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames*, published last year. [p. 116]

✍ **Elizabeth Bishop** (1911–1979), the poet laureate of the United States from 1949 to 1950, published two poems in *The Nation* between 1945 and 1947, when Randall Jarrell was interim literary editor. She was a longtime friend of the more frequent *Nation* contributor Marianne Moore, who in a 1946 review in these pages described Bishop as "spectacular in being unspectacular." [p. 229]

Robert L. Borosage, contributing editor, is co-founder and co-director of the Campaign for America's Future; he has written regularly for *The Nation* since 1976. [p. 124]

✍ **Margaret Bourke-White** (1904–1971) was the first woman to work as a photographer for *Life* magazine. Her book of pictures from the Dust Bowl, *You Have Seen Their Faces*, was published in 1937. [p. 90]

✍ **Ray Bradbury** (1920-2012) published "The Garbage Collector" in *The Nation* in 1953—one of the very few pieces of fiction ever to appear in these pages. [p. 101]

Steve Brodner, a leading artist in the world of satire and caricature, has been a contributor to *Harper's Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Rolling Stone*, *National Lampoon*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Playboy*, *Spy*, *Esquire* and many other publications. He has also been a frequent and longtime contributor to *The Nation*. [pp. 39 and 167]

✍ **Heywood Broun** (1888–1939), a founding member of the Algonquin Round Table, wrote a column for *The Nation* from 1927 to 1937. He also helped found the Newspaper Guild, which represents *Nation* employees to this day. [p. 87]

Noam Chomsky, institute professor emeritus at MIT, has been a contributor to *The Nation* since 1977, most recently with "On Israel-Palestine and BDS," published last July. [p. 190]

✍ **Richard A. Cloward** (1926–2001) and **Frances Fox Piven** were both working at Columbia University in 1966. A married couple, they published numerous essays in *The Nation* and many books. Now at the CUNY Graduate Center, Piven received the Puffin/Nation Prize for Creative Citizenship in 2014. [p. 147]

✍ **Harold Clurman** (1901–1980) was *The Nation*'s theater critic from 1953 to 1980. [p. 105]

✍ **Alexander Cockburn** (1941–2012) was the "Beat the Devil" columnist from 1984 until his death. [p. 162]

Sue Coe, born in England, is a New York artist and illustrator. Her books include *Dead Meat* (1996), which has an introduction by Alexander Cockburn. [pp. 166, 168 and 227]

✍ **Stephen F. Cohen**, contributing editor, professor of Russian studies and history emeritus at NYU, and professor of politics emeritus at Princeton, wrote *The Nation*'s "Sovieticus" column from 1984 to 1987, and since 1979 has written in the magazine on the subjects of Russia and US-Russian relations. [p. 181]

David Cole, professor of law and public policy at Georgetown University, has written for *The Nation* about immigration, free speech and national security since 1989 and has been the magazine's legal affairs correspondent since 2000. [p. 218]

David Corn, a *Nation* intern in 1981, was Washington editor from 1987 to 2007; he is now at *Mother Jones*. His latest book is *Showdown: The Inside Story of How Obama Fought Back Against Boehner, Cantor, and the Tea Party* (2012). [p. 64] ✍ The philosopher **Arthur C. Danto** (1914–2013) was *The Nation*'s art critic from 1984 to 2008. [p. 170]

✍ Born in a Galilee village later destroyed by the Israeli army, **Mahmoud Darwish** lived for years in exile in Beirut and Paris before returning to Palestine in 1996. The most widely translated modern Arab poet, Darwish died in 2008. [p. 250]

Bill de Blasio is mayor of New York City. [p. 80]

✍ **Floyd Dell** (1887–1969), a critic, playwright and novelist, was managing editor of *The Masses* until it was suppressed as "treasonable material" during World War I. [p. 77]

✍ **John Richard Dennett** (1838–1874), class poet of Harvard '62, journeyed through the South after the Civil War, filing regular reports in *The Nation*. He was later an assistant editor. [p. 23]

E.L. Doctorow, a *Nation* contributor since 1978, published his latest novel, *Andrew's Brain*, last year. [p. 201]

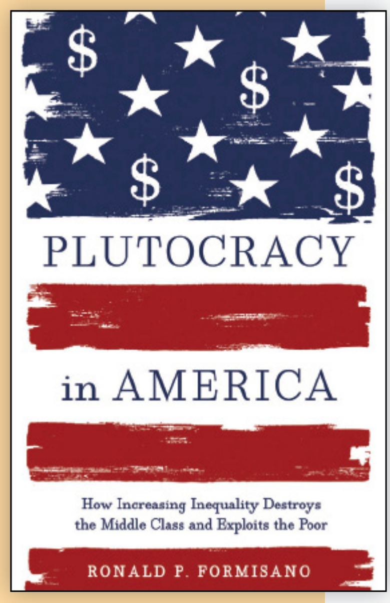
Ariel Dorfman's latest book is *Feeding on Dreams: Confessions of an Unrepentant Exile* (2011). He lives with his wife, Angélica, in Durham, North Carolina, and, from time to time, in Chile. He teaches at Duke University. [p. 70]

✍ **John Dos Passos** (1896–1970) wrote occasional pieces for *The Nation* between 1920 and 1943. He was later a frequent contributor to *National Review*. [p. 91]

Eric Drooker's paintings have appeared on dozens of covers of *The New Yorker*. He is the author of *Howl: A Graphic Novel* and was the animation designer for the film *Howl*. [pp. 161, 179 and 187]

✍ **W.E.B. Du Bois** (1868–1963), a founder of the NAACP and editor of its magazine, *The Crisis*, wrote letters, reviews and essays for *The Nation* over a span of more than fifty years. He died in Ghana the day before the August 1963 March on Washington. [p. 102]

✍ **Barbara Ehrenreich** has contributed regularly to *The Nation* since 1982 and has been a member of the editorial board since 2007.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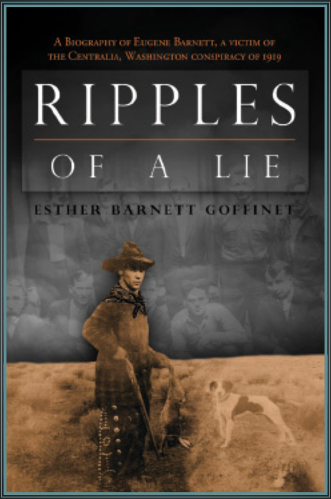
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Her most recent book is *Living With a Wild God: A Nonbeliever's Search for the Truth About Everything* (2014). [p. 158]

✍ When **Albert Einstein** (1879–1955) wrote an article for *The Nation* in 1931 about a disarmament conference in Geneva, the list of contributors to that issue described him as "the greatest of living scientists" and "the foremost conscientious objector to war." [p. 88]

✍ **Bernard Fall** (1926–1967) first traveled to Indochina in 1953. Carey McWilliams writes in his memoir that he had received "a tip… that this remarkable young scholar might have some important things to say about Vietnam." Fall was killed by a land mine in Vietnam, and the last book of his that was published during his lifetime was *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* (1966). [p. 99]

✍ **Manny Farber** (1917–2008) was *The Nation*'s film critic (and occasional art critic) from 1949 to 1954. Susan Sontag called him "the liveliest, smartest, most original film critic this country has ever produced." [p. 98]

Frances FitzGerald, a member of the editorial board, is the author of *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (1972), which won the Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes as well as the National Book Award. [p. 99]

Eric Foner, Dewitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University, has been a contributor to *The Nation* since 1977—his first article was about Sacco and Vanzetti—and on the editorial board since 1996. His latest book is *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*, published in January. [pp. 38 and 138]

✍ Reviewing **Robert Frost**'s first book, *A Boy's Will*, in 1915, *The Nation* described him as "a poet by endowment," but "a symbolist only by trade." Frost (1874–1963) wrote four poems for *The Nation* in the 1920s. When he died, the sportswriter Roger Kahn wrote in the magazine of his friend: "Robert Frost is dead and my mortality and yours is thus more stark." [p. 41]

✍ **Zona Gale** (1874–1938), a novelist and playwright, was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama, in 1921. [p. 82]

Thomas Geoghegan, a Chicago-based labor lawyer, has contributed articles on politics and the labor movement since 2000. His book *Only One Thing Can Save Us: Why America Needs a New Kind of Labor Movement* was published in December 2014. [p. 226]

Mark Gevisser has been writing from *The Nation*'s South Africa bureau since 1994. His memoir *Lost and Found in Johannesburg* was published last year. [p. 233]

Paula J. Giddings, professor of Afro-American studies at Smith College, is the editor of the anthology *Burning All Illusions: Writings From The Nation on Race* (2002). [p. 104]

✍ **Allen Ginsberg** (1926–1997) published three poems in *The Nation* in the 1990s. A 1959 letter to the editor he co-wrote is reprinted in this issue. [p. 202]

One of the most celebrated graphic designers in the United States, **Milton Glaser** (with Walter Bernard) led *The Nation*'s redesign in 1978, which put editorials on the front cover. In 2009, he was the first graphic designer to receive the National Medal of the Arts. [p. 191]

✍ **E.L. Godkin** (1831–1902) was the founding editor of *The Nation* and, after selling the weekly in 1881, editor of the *New-York Evening Post*. [pp. 22, 27, 28 and 29]

Michelle Goldberg, the author of *The Means of Reproduction: Sex, Power, and the Future of the World* (2009), has been a senior contributing writer since 2013. She first wrote for *The Nation* on Sarah Palin in 2008. [p. 78]

✍ In 1917, *The Nation* ran a profile of "**Emma Goldman**, prophetess of anarchy." Deported to the Soviet Union in late 1919, Goldman (1869–1940) soon grew disillusioned with the Bolsheviks and fled, returning briefly to the United States in 1934. [p. 88]

Vivian Gornick first wrote for *The Nation* in 1978 on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and has since contributed dozens of essays and reviews. She is the author of *The Romance of American Communism* (1977), *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* (2011), and *The Odd Woman and the City*, which is out next month. [p. 89]

Greg Grandin has been a contributor to *The Nation* since 1999 and a member of the editorial board since 2012. His most recent book is *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, published last year. [p. 155]

✍ As *The Nation*'s art critic from 1942 to 1949, **Clement Greenberg** (1909–1994) was an early and influential supporter of the Abstract Expressionists. [p. 95]

✍ **William Greider** has been *The Nation*'s national affairs correspondent since 1999. His most recent book is *Come Home, America: The Rise and Fall (and Redeeming Promise) of Our Country* (2009). [p. 174]

✍ **William Gropper** (1897–1977) was a radical cartoonist and painter who contributed to *The Nation* for decades, beginning in the 1930s, when he depicted America during the Depression. In *The Nation* in 1932, Louis Lozowick (see his illustration on p. 92) reviewed a Gropper exhibition at the John Reed Club, writing that each of his drawings was "preaching a sermon more eloquent than a dozen editorials." [pp. 82, 93 and 99]

✍ **Robert Grossman** is an accomplished painter, cartoonist, sculptor and Academy Award–nominated filmmaker. He's a longtime *Nation* contributor, and his work has appeared on the covers of more than 500 national magazines. [pp. 156, 158 and 159]

Rochelle Gurstein, a former columnist for *The New Republic*, is the author of *The Repeal of Reticence* (1996). [p. 29]

D.D. Guttenplan, a *Nation* intern in 1979, is the author of *The Nation: A Biography*, just published by eBookNation. His *American Radical: The Life and Times of I.F. Stone* (2009) was awarded the Sperber Prize for Biography in 2010. Guttenplan writes from the London bureau. [pp. 20, 74 and 142]

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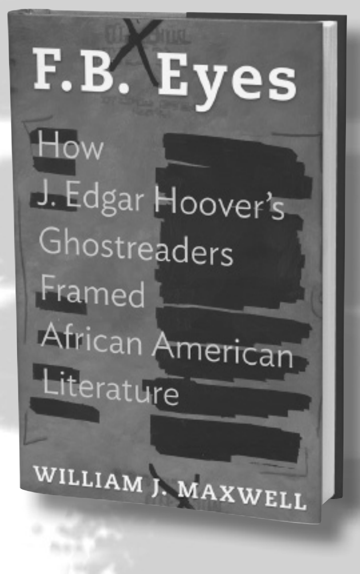
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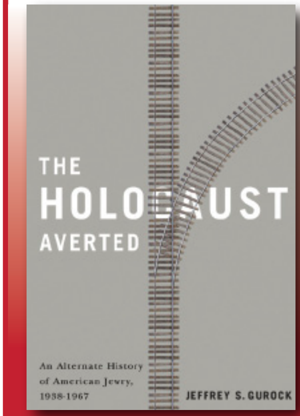

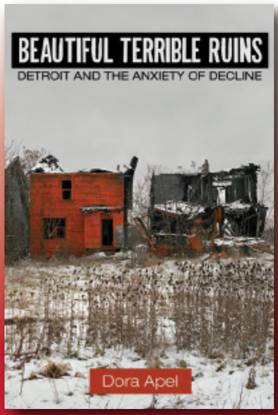

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✍ **Melissa Harris-Perry**, host of a weekend show on MSNBC, wrote *The Nation*'s "Sister Citizen" column from 2010 to 2014. [p. 180]

✍ **Christopher Hayes**, host of *All In* on MSNBC, has contributed to *The Nation* since 2005 and is the magazine's editor at large. [p. 179]

✍ **Mark Hertsgaard**, *The Nation*'s environment correspondent, has been contributing since 1984. He is the author of *HOT: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth* (2011). [p. 169]

✍ **Christopher Hitchens** (1949–2011) first wrote for *The Nation*, about Cyprus, in 1978; in a supposedly temporary arrangement with the *New Statesman*, he came to the United States, and *The Nation*, in 1981. He never went back, soon becoming the magazine's Washington correspondent and "Minority Report" columnist, which he continued writing until the fall of 2002. [p. 160]

✍ **Langston Hughes** (1902–1967) wrote "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" when he was only 24 years old. His last poem in *The Nation* was published in January 1967, just four months before he died. [p. 83]

Mirko Ilić, a professor at the School of Visual Arts, has been art director for the international edition of *Time* magazine and *The New York Times*'s op-ed pages. His books include *The Design of Dissent*, written with Milton Glaser, and *The Anatomy of Design*. [p. 203]

✍ **Molly Ivins** (1944–2007), who first wrote for *The Nation* in 1984, sounded early warnings in the magazine about the rise of George W. Bush. *Molly Ivins: Letters to The Nation* was published by eBookNation in 2013. [p. 172]

✍ **Henry James** (1843–1916), when only 22 years old, wrote an article for the first issue of *The Nation*, printed a few pages after one by his father. He ultimately contributed over 200 reviews and travel essays for *The Nation*, thus earning enough income to pursue a literary career, and wrote a brief memoir for the fiftieth-anniversary issue in 1915. He later came to deeply regret "the gross impudence of youth" that caused the "little atrocity" of his disparagement of Walt Whitman in 1865. [p. 23]

Since 1976, **Frances Jetter**'s prints on political and social subjects have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *The Village Voice*, *The Nation* and *The Progressive*. She is on the Artist's Advisory Board of the Norman Rockwell Museum and has taught at the School of Visual Arts since 1979. [pp. 57 and 165]

Jasper Johns is a painter, sculptor and printmaker who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011. His *Three Flags* (1958) is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. [cover]

Victor Juhasz is a frequent contributor of satiric images to *Rolling Stone* and many other publications. In recent years, he has embedded with US troops in Afghanistan as a combat artist. Last year, he illustrated a children's book about the 1939 hot dog barbecue hosted by Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt for the king and queen of England. [p. 111]

✍ **Richard Kim** was a *Nation* intern in 1997 and is now the executive editor. [p. 179]

✍ **Martin Luther King Jr.** (1929–1968) wrote annual reports on the civil-rights movement for *The Nation* between 1961 and 1966, as well as the magazine's editorial on James Meredith's attempt to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1962. [p. 147]

✍ **Freda Kirchwey** (1893–1976) joined the staff of *The Nation* in 1918; her first job was to aggregate articles from the foreign press for the International Relations Supplement. She later became managing editor and then editor from 1937 to 1955. Especially active in the 1920s in organizing discussions of feminism and "the new morality" in sexual relations, Kirchwey also championed antifascism, which led to her lifelong support for Spanish republicans, and the creation of Israel, for which she, and *The Nation*, lobbied both the Truman administration and the United Nations. [pp. 94 and 96]

Stuart Klawans has reviewed films for *The Nation* since 1988. He won the 2007 National Magazine Award for Reviews and Criticism. [p. 194]

✍ **Naomi Klein** has been contributing to *The Nation* since 2000. Her most recent book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (2014), began as a *Nation* cover story. [p. 176]

✍ **Andrew Kopkind** (1935–1994) joined *The Nation* in 1982 as associate editor and later as film critic. His collected essays, *The Thirty Years' Wars: Dispatches and Diversions of a Radical Journalist*, were published in 1995. [pp. 161 and 165]

Peter Kornbluh has covered US-Cuba relations for *The Nation* for more than twenty years. He directs the Cuba Documentation Project at the National Security Archive and is co-author, with William M. LeoGrande, of *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations Between Washington and Havana* (2014). He appreciates the support of Justin Anstett, Molly Styslinger and *Nation* archivist Richard Kreitner in researching this article. [p. 60]

Richard Kreitner is special assistant to the publisher for the 150th anniversary and editor of *The Nation*'s archive blogs "The Almanac" and "Back Issues." [p. 37]

✍ **Tony Kushner**, a member of the editorial board since 2001, has written for *The Nation* on Arthur Miller, the murder of Matthew Shepard and the censorship of art. [p. 165]

✍ **Laila Lalami** has written for *The Nation* since 2005. Her novel *The Moor's Account* was published last year. [p. 182]

Elinor Langer, a contributor to *The Nation* since 1964 and a member of the editorial board, is working on a biography of Queen Lili'uokalani of Hawaii. [p. 32]

✍ **John Leonard** (1939–2008) began his career at *National Review* before spending many years as a critic and *Book Review* editor at *The New York Times*. He began writing for *The Nation* in 1979, and he and his wife, Sue, served as *The Nation*'s literary editors from 1995 to 1998. "When I start to read John Leonard," *Nation* contributor Kurt Vonnegut said, "it is as though I, while simply looking for the men's room, blundered into a lecture by the smartest man who ever lived." [p. 161]

✍ **Penny Lernoux** (1940–1989) wrote on Latin American affairs for *The Nation* from 1971 to 1987. [p. 153]

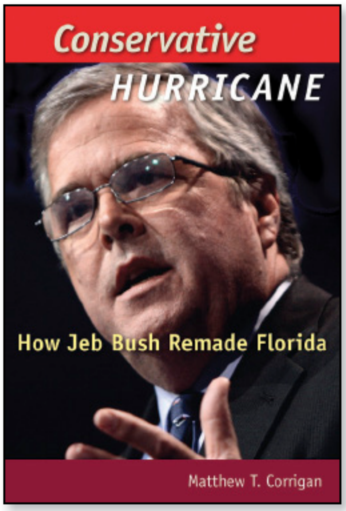
✍ **Orlando Letelier** (1932–1976), minister of foreign affairs under Chilean President Salvador Allende, wrote this article weeks before he was assassinated in Washington, DC. [p. 152]

✍ **David Levine** (1926–2009) was a longtime contributor of caricatures to *The New York Review of Books*. In a 2008 interview with *The Nation*, Levine described the purpose of his art: "Caricature is a form of hopeful statement: I'm drawing this critical look at what you're doing, and I hope that you will learn something from what I'm doing." [p. 153]

Helen Lewis is deputy editor of the *New Statesman*. [p. 128]

✍ **Annie R.M. Logan** (1851–1933) wrote well over 100 reviews in *The Nation* between 1884 and 1906. Born in New Brunswick, she spent most of her adult life in Montreal. [p. 36]

✍ **William MacDonald** (1863–1938) was a professor of history at Brown University until



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1917, when he resigned and became a wartime correspondent and then associate editor for *The Nation*. Oswald Garrison Villard, who was away when Macdonald wrote this editorial, recalled in his memoir: “[the piece] bowled me over when I saw it.” [p. 79]

Maria Margaronis was a *Nation* intern in 1983 and later associate literary editor. She now writes from *The Nation*’s London bureau. [p. 68]

✍ **Margaret Marshall** (1900–1974) joined the editorial staff of *The Nation* in 1928 as assistant to Freda Kirchwey; she was literary editor from 1937 to 1953. By most accounts, her back-of-the-book section was more aggressively anti-Stalinist than the rest of the magazine, a tension many assumed was behind her departure. [p. 92]

Michael Massing, author of *The Fix* (2000), about the “war on drugs,” has been writing for *The Nation* since 1981. He is a former editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. [p. 212]

✍ **Claude McKay** (1889–1948), author of the novels *Home to Harlem* (1928) and *Banjo* (1929), only published this one poem in *The Nation*, but he also wrote three essays in the mid-1930s on race relations in New York City—including a firsthand report on the 1935 Harlem riot—and one travel dispatch from North Africa. [p. 186]

✍ **Carey McWilliams** (1905–1980) first wrote for *The Nation* in 1929, a review of a biography of Ambrose Bierce. His own book on Bierce was published later that year; he was only 23. Later books included the influential *Factories in the Field* (1939) and *Prejudice* (1944), the first book about the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. After serving as the magazine’s West Coast editor for many years, McWilliams relocated to New York in 1952 to help with a special issue on civil liberties. He succeeded Freda Kirchwey as editor in 1955 and served for two decades, stewarding *The Nation* through perilous years of redbaiting and aligning the magazine with the nascent civil-rights movement and the early opposition to the Vietnam War. After his retirement, McWilliams published his memoir, *The Education of Carey McWilliams* (1979). [p. 98]

✍ **D.M. Means** (1847–1931), a lawyer and economist, was an editorial writer for *The Nation* and the *New-York Evening Post*. [p. 35]

✍ **H.L. Mencken** (1880–1956) began writing for *The Nation* in 1920 and contributed frequently until 1936. He once wrote that *The Nation* was “the dullest publication of any sort ever printed in the world” before, in 1918, Oswald Garrison Villard “took it over, threw out the garbage and started printing the truth.” [p. 80]

Eugène Mihaesco, born in Romania, has been a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, *Time* and *The New Yorker*, where he published seventy covers between 1972 and 1992. He has had solo exhibitions at the St. Etienne gallery in New York and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. [p. 49]

✍ **Edward Miliband**, a *Nation* intern in 1989, is leader of the Labour Party in Britain. [p. 163]

✍ The playwright **Arthur Miller** (1915–2005) first wrote for *The Nation* in 1954, with a satirical “modest proposal” that all citizens, when they turn 18, be forced to prove their patriotism. Many decades later, he wrote extensive accounts of visits to Nelson Mandela, in 1991, and Fidel Castro, in 2004. [p. 167]

✍ **Jessica Mitford** (1917–1996) was the author of *The American Way of Death* (1963), an exposé of the funeral industry, and the memoir *The Making of a Muckraker* (1979). [p. 106]

Ange Mlinko is the poetry editor of *The Nation* and the author of *Marvelous Things Overheard: Poems* (2013). [p. 53]

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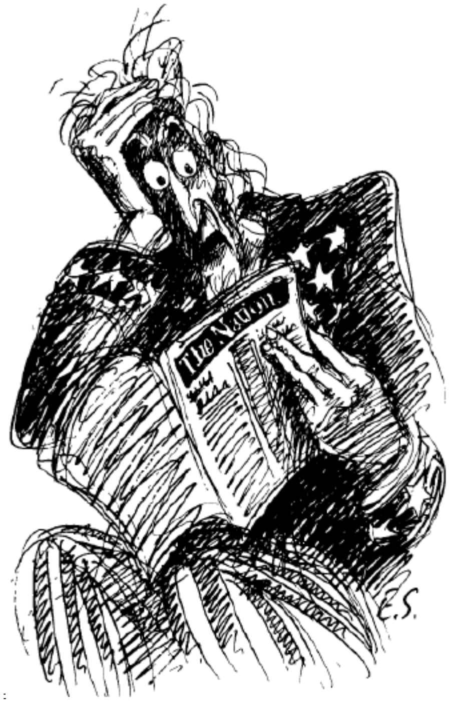
✍ **Marianne Moore** (1887–1972) wrote eleven essays and seven poems for *The Nation* between 1936 and 1952. Moore's biographer, Linda Leavell, indicates that she stopped contributing out of solidarity with her friend, ousted literary editor Margaret Marshall, but also because she disliked *The Nation*'s criticism of Eisenhower's "honest, auspicious, genuinely devoted speeches." [p. 249]

Michael Moore is a filmmaker, author and *Nation* contributing editor. As US president, he would see to it that every home receives a subscription to *The Nation*. [p. 134]

✍ **Lewis Henry Morgan** (1818–1881), an anthropologist and lawyer, was the only American whose work was cited by Karl Marx, Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud. [p. 27]

Toni Morrison, a member of *The Nation*'s editorial board since 1990, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. Her latest novel, *God Help the Child*, is out this month. [p. 184]

Khalil Gibran Muhammad is the author of *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Urban America* (2011) and director of the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. [p. 138]



✍ Just one year out of Harvard Law School, **Ralph Nader** published this article on car safety in the pages of *The Nation*, later expanding his ideas into his first book, *Unsafe at Any Speed* (1965), which helped launch the consumer-rights movement. [p. 102]

Victor Navasky was editor of *The Nation* from 1978 to 1995 and publisher and editorial director from 1995 to 2005. His books include *Naming Names* (1980), *A Matter of Opinion* (2005) and *The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power* (2013). Navasky is now publisher emeritus of *The Nation*, director of the George T. Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism at Columbia University and chairman of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. [p. 109]

John Nichols, *The Nation*'s Washington correspondent, has contributed to the magazine since 1994. His latest book, co-written with Robert McChesney, is *Dollarocracy: How the Money-and-Media Election Complex Is Destroying America* (2013). [p. 221]

Jack O'Dell served in the United States Merchant Marine during World War II and afterward was a member of the Communist Party and a leading civil-rights activist. O'Dell was also an editor of the journal *Freedomways*, co-founded by W.E.B. Du Bois. [p. 188]

✍ **Rollo Ogden** (1856–1937) was editor of the *New-York Evening Post* for nearly two decades and a frequent *Nation* contributor before joining *The New York Times*. Oswald Garrison

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Villard wrote in 1922 that Ogden "took his plunge into the dull senescence of *The Times*'s editorial page." [p. 35]

✍ This poem by **Frank O'Hara** (1926–1966) was published the same year his collection *Lunch Poems* brought him to fame. [p. 59]

✍ **Frederick Law Olmsted** (1822–1903), journalist and landscape architect, came up with the idea for *The Nation*, but was too busy to get it off the ground. Olmsted was later associate editor and part-owner. [p. 24]

✍ Known as the "father of pragmatism," the philosopher **Charles Sanders Peirce** (1839–1914) earned much of his living for years as a freelancer for *The Nation*, writing over 300 articles on subjects both weighty and light. [p. 34]

Rick Perlstein, a contributor since 1995, is the author, most recently, of *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (2014). [p. 48]

Darryl Pinckney, a longtime contributor to *The New York Review of Books*, is the author of the novel *High Cotton* (1992) and *Blackballed: The Black Vote and US Democracy* (2014). He first wrote for *The Nation* in 1980. [p. 138]

✍ **Sylvia Plath** (1932–1963) published four poems in *The Nation* between 1955 and 1960. [p. 46]

Elizabeth Pochoda, editor of *Antiques* magazine, was *The Nation*'s literary editor from 1976 to 1989 and later a columnist. She is now on the editorial board. [p. 52]

Katha Pollitt, a winner of two National Magazine Awards, has contributed to *The Nation* since 1975—first as a poet and later as literary editor, film reviewer, contributing editor, associate editor and, since 1994, "Subject to Debate" columnist. [pp. 56 and 164]

✍ **Adolph Reed Jr.**, professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, has contributed to *The Nation* since 1988. He wrote a two-part essay on Louis Farrakhan in 1991. His father, political scientist Adolph Reed Sr., wrote the *Nation* essay "Crisis on the Negro Campus" in 1962. [p. 166]

Betsy Reed, a *Nation* senior editor from 1998 to 2006, was executive editor until 2014. She is now editor in chief of the Intercept. [p. 56]

✍ Over a half-century, **Adrienne Rich** (1929–2012) wrote twenty-two poems for *The Nation* and several reviews and essays, including a 2002 piece exploring the meaning of "antiwar." [p. 214]

Joel Rogers, a *Nation* contributing editor, is professor of law, political science, public affairs and sociology at the University of Wisconsin. He has written for *The Nation* on politics, labor and oligopoly since 1978. [p. 206]

✍ **Edward W. Said** (1935–2003), author of the classic *Orientalism* (1978), was *The Nation*'s music critic from 1986 until his death. He also wrote numerous essays and reviews on politics and religion, beginning with a 1980 essay, "Islam Through Western Eyes." [p. 168]

✍ **Jean-Paul Sartre**'s (1905–1980) philosophy of existentialism was described in *The Nation*'s review of *No Exit* as "neatly combin[ing] the disadvantages of religious faith with those of nihilistic atheism." [p. 97]

Kshama Sawant is a member of the Seattle City Council. [p. 210]

✍ **Jeremy Scahill**, author of *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* (2013) and co-founder of the Intercept, first contributed to *The Nation* in 1998 and was *The Nation*'s national security

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correspondent until 2013. He is now a contributing editor. [p. 176]

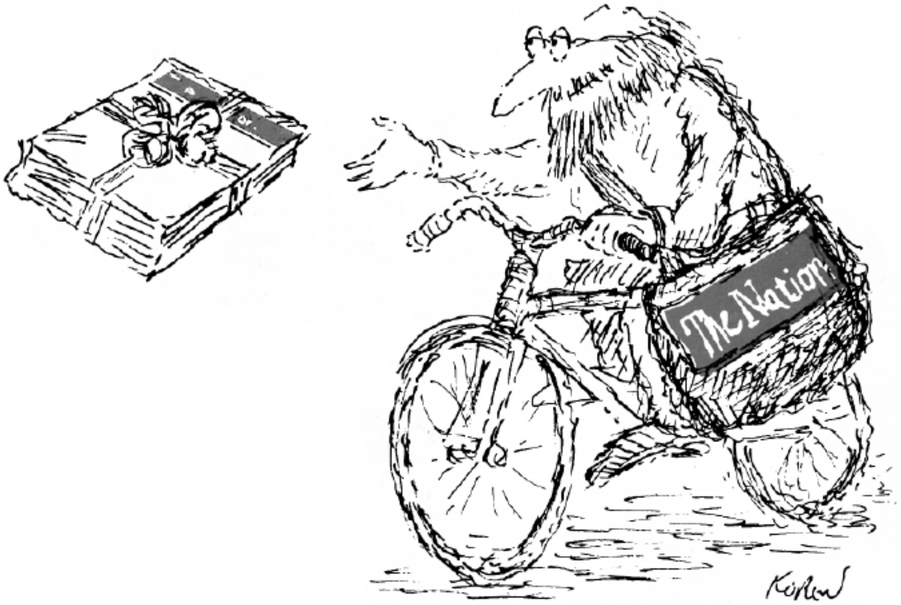
✍ **Jonathan Schell** (1943–2014) was *The Nation*'s peace and disarmament correspondent from 1998 until his death. (pp. 171 and 173)

✍ **Anne Sexton** (1928–1974) won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967 for *Live or Die*. [p. 220]

Gene Seymour, a former music and film critic at *Newsday*, has contributed numerous essays and film, book and music reviews to *The Nation* since 1990. [p. 198]

✍ Born in present-day Lithuania, **Ben Shahn** (1898–1969) was a painter, illustrator and photographer. After the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, Shahn made a series of twenty-three paintings of the pair. (*The Nation* gruffly described them as "disappointing.") His 1967 mosaic mural of Sacco and Vanzetti is on the campus of Syracuse University. [pp. 86 and 96]

✍ **Robert Sherrill** (1924–2014) served for years as *The Nation*'s White House correspondent despite being barred from its premises for getting in one too many fistfights. "I didn't want to be in the White House," he later recalled. "I had been in Washington long enough to realize that was the last place to waste your time sitting around." [p. 167]



Yuko Shimizu is a Japanese illustrator based in New York City and an instructor at the School of Visual Arts. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere. In 2009, *Newsweek Japan* named her one of "100 Japanese People the World Respects." [p. 71]

✍ **Daniel Singer** (1926–2000) wrote about European politics for *The Nation* for three decades, beginning in 1970. Gore Vidal called him "one of the best, and certainly the sanest,

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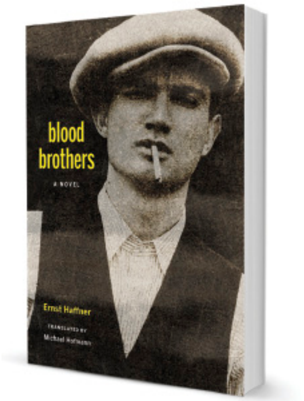

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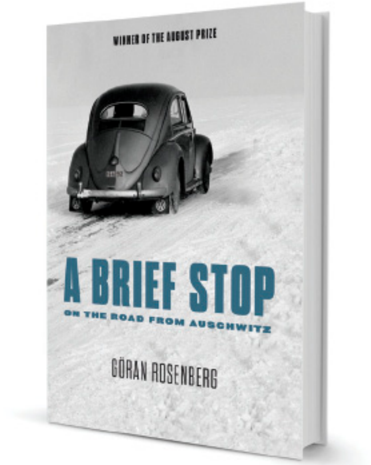

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—ADAM KIRSCH, senior editor for *Tablet*

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interpreters of things European for American readers." [p. 157]

Mychal Denzel Smith is a Knobler Fellow at The Nation Institute and a contributing writer for the magazine. [p. 138]

Rebecca Solnit is a contributing editor at *Harper's Magazine* and the author of numerous books, most recently *Men Explain Things to Me* (2014). [p. 185]

✍ Formerly art director for *Monocle*, the satirical magazine founded by Victor Navasky in the early 1960s, **Edward Sorel** is one of the most prolific and celebrated illustrators in the United States today. Since 1980, he has been a frequent contributor of political cartoons to *The Nation*. [pp. 162, 168 and 170]

Michael Sorkin is *The Nation*'s architecture critic and the author of *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan* (2009) and *All Over the Map: Writing on Buildings and Cities* (2011). His first article for the magazine was a 1979 review of a Lewis Mumford memoir. [p. 127]

Art Spiegelman won the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for *Maus*—reviewed in *The Nation* by Robert Grossman—and was a staff artist for *The New Yorker* from 1993 to 2003. In 2004, he published *In the Shadow of No Towers*, about the attacks of September 11, 2001. His project *Wordless!*, a multimedia history of the graphic novel, premiered in the United States in January 2014. [pp. 119 and 178]

✍ A few months before **John Steinbeck** (1902–1968) published this article in *The Nation*, Mary McCarthy took to these pages to deride his novel *In Dubious Battle* as "academic, wooden, inert." Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962. [p. 93]

Wen Stephenson, a *Nation* contributing writer, is the author of *What We're Fighting for Now Is Each Other: Climate Justice and the Struggle for a Livable World*, forthcoming from Beacon Press in October. [p. 145]

✍ **Wallace Stevens** (1879–1955) published ten poems in *The Nation* between 1936 and 1952. [p. 204]

✍ **I.F. Stone** (1907–1989) first contributed to *The Nation* in 1934, when he was still writing under his given name, Isidor Feinstein. In 1940 he became the magazine's Washington editor. From 1953 to 1971, he edited and published *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, and in 1987 he returned to writing for *The Nation*. [p. 95]

✍ **Simeon Strunsky** (1879–1948), born in Belarus, wrote frequently on literary themes for *The Nation* while on the staff of the *New-York Evening Post*. [p. 37]

Bhaskar Sunkara is editor and publisher of *Jacobin* and a senior editor at *In These Times*. [p. 222]

✍ **Norman Thomas** (1884–1968) was associate editor of *The Nation* in the early 1920s and a frequent contributor for more than three decades. He later ran for president as a Socialist multiple times, earning *The Nation*'s endorsement, over Franklin Roosevelt, in 1932. [p. 92]

✍ **E.P. Thompson**'s (1924–1993) *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) was a foundational text in the development of social history. In 1981, *The Nation* devoted an entire issue to his "Letter to America." [p. 159]

✍ **Hunter S. Thompson**'s big break came when his fellow Californian, Carey McWilliams, asked him to write about the Hell's Angels, an article Thompson (1937–2005) later turned into his first book. In his memoir, McWilliams recalls that *The Nation* could no longer afford Thompson after that, but that "when he came to New York he usually dropped by the office for a chat, carting a six-pack of beer." [p. 148]

Michael Tomasky was a *Nation* intern in 1987; he is now a contributor to the Daily Beast and *The New York Review of Books* and editor of the journal *Democracy*. [p. 120]

Tom Tomorrow is the nom de plume of Dan Perkins, whose weekly political cartoon, "This Modern World," appears in approximately eighty newspapers across the United States and on the web. In 2013, he received the Herblock Prize for editorial cartooning. [pp. 129 and 178]

Touré is the author of *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness? What It Means to Be Black Now* (2011) and *I Would Die 4 U: Why Prince Became an Icon* (2013). [p. 83]

Calvin Trillin wrote a column for *The Nation* between 1978 and 1990, and since 1990 has been the Deadline Poet. "Cruising to Port" is adapted from his essay "Man Overboard," which originally appeared in *Brill's Content*. [p. 67]

✍ **Dalton Trumbo** (1905–1976) was among the Hollywood Ten who refused to answer questions from the House Un-American Activities Committee about his political beliefs or associations. In 1965, he wrote a short memoir about the blacklist for *The Nation*'s 100th-anniversary issue. [p. 103]

Katrina vanden Heuvel, an intern in 1980, is editor and publisher of *The Nation*. [pp. 1 and 138]

✍ **Gore Vidal** (1925–2012) wrote for *The Nation* from 1958 until 2007 and was a contributing editor for the last three decades of his life. Vidal's many contributions to these pages are collected in *Gore Vidal's State of the Union*, published by eBookNation in 2013. [p. 157]

✍ **Oswald Garrison Villard** (1872–1949) first wrote for *The Nation* in 1894, when he was 21. In 1918, he became editor of *The Nation*, which he steered decisively to the left. Villard stepped down from the editorship in 1933 and published his memoir *Fighting Years* in 1939. [pp. 36 and 86]

✍ **Alice Walker**, author of *The Color Purple* (1982), was a student of Howard Zinn's at Spelman College in the early 1960s. [p. 163]

Carrie Mae Weems is an American photographer and video artist whose series *Colored People* is on view at the US Mission to the United Nations in New York. [p. 151]

✍ **Edmund White**, whose latest book is *Inside a Pearl: My Years in Paris* (2014), has reviewed for *The Nation* works by Milan Kundera, E.L. Doctorow, Tony Kushner and others. [p. 154]

✍ **Horace White** (1834–1916) was editor of the *New-York Evening Post* from 1899 to 1903. [p. 32]

Jon Wiener, professor of history at the University of California, Irvine, has been a *Nation* contributing editor since 1987. His latest book is *How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey Across America* (2012). [p. 224]

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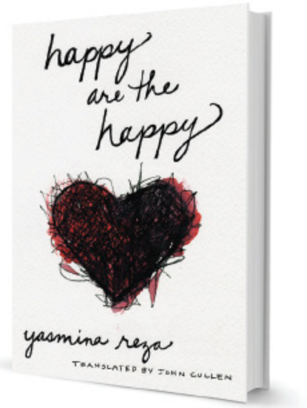

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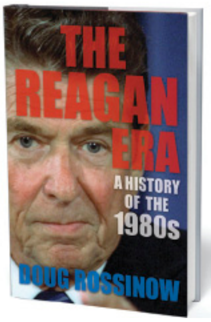

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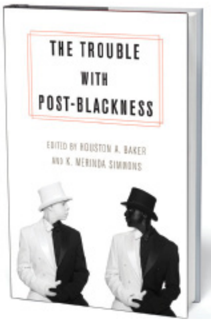

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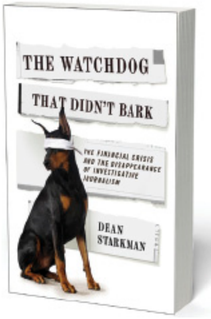

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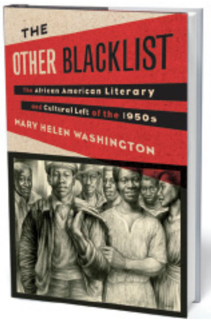

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Amy Wilentz was one of the first *Nation* interns, then became assistant literary editor and is now a longtime contributing editor. Wilentz teaches journalism at the University of California, Irvine, and has published numerous books, including *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter From Haiti* (2013). She first wrote about Haiti in our pages in 1987. [p. 230]

Isabel Wilkerson is a Pulitzer Prize–winning former reporter for *The New York Times* and the author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010). [p. 138]

✍ **Patricia J. Williams**, professor of law at Columbia University, has written the "Diary of a Mad Law Professor" column for *The Nation* since 1997. [pp. 138 and 177]

✍ **William Appleman Williams** (1921–1990) published his first articles in *The Nation* in 1956 and continued contributing until 1985. [p. 154]

✍ **William Carlos Williams** (1883–1963) published several essays and poems in *The Nation* between 1937 and 1961; his work has been reviewed in these pages by Philip Rahv, Robert Lowell, Delmore Schwartz, Isaac Rosenfeld, Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov and James Longenbach. [p. 248]

✍ **Ellen Willis** (1941–2006) wrote essays for *The Nation* on topics from pop culture to the "war on terror" between 1981 and 2004. [p. 171]

JoAnn Wypijewski was a *Nation* intern in 1981 and has filled many spots on the masthead: assistant copy editor, copy chief, managing editor, senior editor. She is now an independent journalist and the "Carnal Knowledge" columnist for *The Nation*. [p. 44]

✍ **William Butler Yeats** (1865–1939) published his first poem in *The Nation* in 1933; his last appeared three months after his death. [p. 115]

✍ **Art Young** (1866–1943) was a cartoonist and writer whose work appeared in *The Masses* from 1911 until the publication was suppressed during World War I. Young became *The Nation*'s first regular illustrator in 1922, contributing full-page features titled "Looking On." When he died—at the Hotel Irving, just a few blocks from *The Nation*'s current offices—Margaret Marshall wrote in these pages: "There was something old-fashioned about Art Young, about his personality, his humor, his art, his radicalism. All were indigenous in the best sense of the word; all seemed to hail from a simpler, pre-industrial America, where individualism was personal, not political, where humor was broad, art was not a private language, and radicalism consisted of the moral conviction that all men are created equal and that it isn't fair for some people to have a lot while others have nothing." The Bethel Historical Society in Connecticut is hosting an exhibit devoted to Young—the first since 1939—through April 26. [p. 78]

Gary Younge has written *The Nation*'s "Beneath the Radar" column since 2006. He is the author of *The Speech: The Story Behind Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream* (2013). [p. 16]

✍ **Howard Zinn** (1922–2010) wrote for *The Nation* from 1960 to 2008; the articles are collected in *Some Truths Are Not Self-Evident: Essays in The Nation on Civil Rights, Vietnam and the "War on Terror,"* published by eBookNation last year. [p. 104]

Dave Zirin, who has written about sports for *The Nation* since 2005, is the author of eight books, including *Brazil's Dance With the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics, and the Fight for Democracy* (2014). [p. 200]

✍ Indicates a selection from the *Nation* archives.

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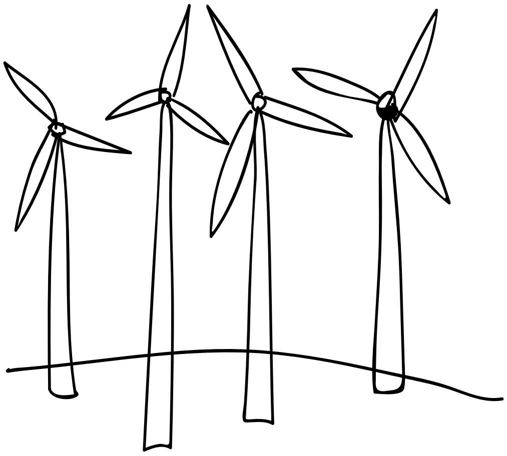

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Puzzle No. 3358

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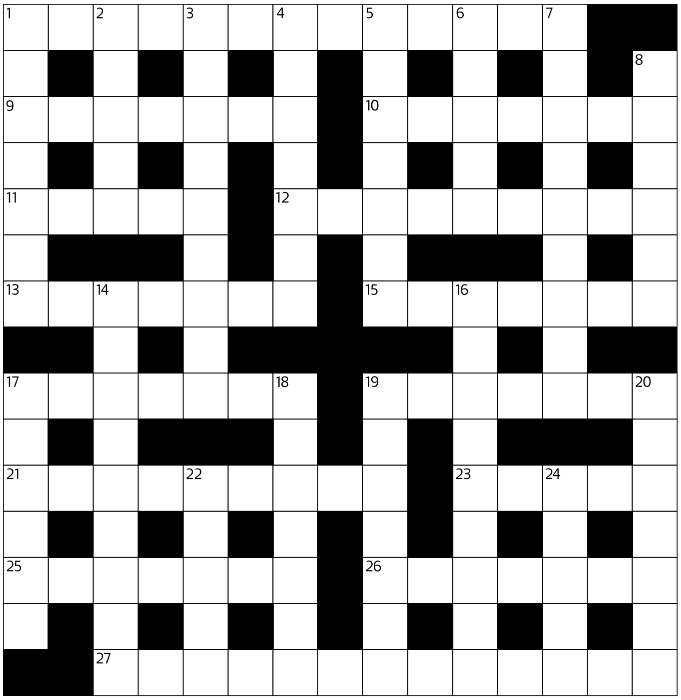


The ten highlighted clues are by Frank W. Lewis, who constructed the Nation *puzzle for more than sixty years.*

ACROSS

1 *Well, you wouldn't have them, most likely! (5,3,5)*

9 City built from granite (7)

10 *A specific requirement came first, if so goaded (7)*

11 *One hears it's cold, but it might be very hot (5)*

12 Disgusting vices with exes? That's over the top (9)

13 Uncontrolled yen to take back sweet wine in breakdown of order (7)

15 *The Burma Shave poetry—or just the opposite? (7)*

17 *Possibly one name for a flower in the buttercup family (7)*

19 Subversive once repelled Communist (one who makes things secret) (7)

21 Hose attachment run almost to the end by confused clerk, after losing start of coil (9)

23 *Country you get to by plane transfer (5)*

25 *Three-quarters will never make it (7)*

26 Islander mangling a hint involving artificial intelligence (7)

27 *What the electric company has in its favor (7,6)*

DOWN

1 You'll find one on the front of *The New York Times*! (7)

2 Boundless party? That's what you might hear in New Delhi, perhaps (5)

3 In a musical score, animated point? It is poor, unfortunately (9)

4 *Run up to the southeast and bury the end of it where you'd see little ones (7)*

5 Criticize expert over a cure for anything that ails you (7)

6 Thoughts turned aside (5)

7 What troops did in Iraq, initially: created strong connections all around (9)

8 Stick had broken before (6)

14 Misrepresent other quote when reviewing abstract (9)

16 Hiring opportunities in three states? That is satisfactory (9)

17 Gold beginning to supplant a different metal in capital (6)

18 General assembly to get bigger (7)

19 *Supposedly you have this condition when someone is talking about you—being within listening range (7)*

20 Carpeting involves a number in making decisions (7)

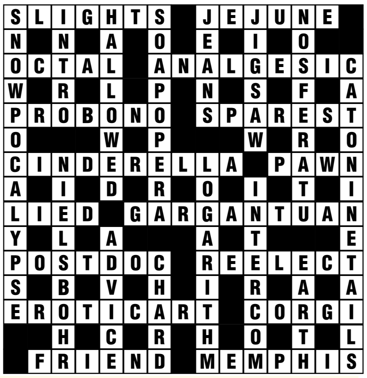
22 Reign wildly in an African nation (5)

24 Pass on grain's cost (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3357

ACROSS **1** S(L)IGHTS **5** JE + JUNE **8** rev. hidden **9** ANAL + GE(S)IC (*e-cig* anag.) **11** P(ROB)O + NO **12** SPA REST **13** anag. **16** 2 defs. **18** 2 defs. **19** letter bank **21** P(OSTDO)C (*stood* anag.) **23** hidden **25** EROT I (rev.) + CART **26** hidden **27** F(R)IEND **28** ME(MPH)IS (*semi* anag.)

DOWN **1** SNOWPO(CALYPS[o])E (*we snoop* anag.) **2** IN(T)RO (*iron* anag.) **3** HALL + OWED **4** SO[d]A POP ERA **5** 2 defs. **6** JIG + SAW (rev.) **7** anag. **10** CATO + NIN +E-TAILS **14** anag. **15** "lager rhythm" **17** anag. **20** pun **22** "charred" **24** E(ART)H



S	L	I	G	H	T	S	■	J	E	J	U	N	E	■
N	■	N	■	A	■	O	■	E	■	I	■	O	■	■
O	C	T	A	L	■	A	N	A	L	G	E	S	I	C
W	■	R	■	L	■	P	■	N	■	S	■	F	■	A
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Kosman and Picciotto explain "How to Work *The Nation*'s Cryptic Puzzles" at thenation.com/puzzle-rules.

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THE Nation.

DIGITAL Magazine

10 — The Nation. — *February 15, 2010*

Eric Alterman

The Games Journalists Play

It's no exaggeration to say that John Heilemann and Mark Halperin's *Game Change* proved to be one of those brief, earthshaking events in "the village" that are *the* story until they're—almost immediately—replaced by another one. (In this case, its replacement was a genuine earthquake in Haiti and a metaphorical one in Massachusetts.) Because of the authors' unparalleled access to the 2008 presidential race's major players, and their willingness to offer blanket anonymity to those willing to spill, they succeeded in constructing a rather rare commodity: a book that sings as it singes; a story that suffers not at all from the reader's full knowledge of how it all turns out.

Phenomena such as *Game Change*'s publication are often more instructive for what they show about the community that prizes them than for the actual information they contain. Its most revealing passages, as Hendrik Hertzberg noted in *The New Yorker*, "are based on what may be fairly called gossip." It is packed with score-settling, back-stabbing, virtuoso displays of profanity by its principals and some awfully impressive feats of mind reading by its authors. As Charles Pierce pointed out in his "Slacker Friday" appearance on my "Altercation" blog, what there isn't is any discussion of, say, healthcare, Afghanistan or Al Qaeda. But surely this is an accurate reflection of the meaning of "news" to the MSM Powers That Be. While *New York*'s Heilemann is one of the more independent-minded mainstream reporters, Halperin, of *Time* and formerly of ABC, occupies a place in the forging of insider conventional wisdom not unlike that of *Vogue*'s Anna Wintour in the fashion world, with a focus no less intense on appearances and shiny surfaces.

The Liberal Media

Just before the book was published, as its spin machine was falling into place, *The Atlantic*'s Marc Ambinder offered this assessment: "Political scientists aren't going to like this book, because it portrays politics as it is actually lived by the candidates, their staff and the press, which is to say—a messy, sweaty, ugly, arduous competition between flawed human beings—a universe away from numbers and probabilities and theories."

Challenged privately, Ambinder retracted and apologized for this crack, going so far as to promise to attend the next convention of the Midwest Political Science Association as penance. Even so, he was surely giving voice to what most political journalists and practitioners believe. (*The New York Times Magazine*'s Matt Bai made a similarly sweeping anti-academic statement in a review published in the journal *Democracy* last year.)

A second unintentional revelation of *Game Change* is the actual degree to which political journalists and cooper- ate to create campaign narratives -non- ly understood to

Edwards and the not-so-saintly-after-all Elizabeth Edwards, it is that everything we were sold during the campaign about this couple was a lie. It doesn't really matter much in terms of whether he would have made a good president, but given how much ink is spilled on the "character" issues of candidates and their spouses, it is significant that virtually everything written about the Edwardses when it mattered belied reality. Can this really be news to everyone who covered the 2004 and 2008 campaigns?

The authors also devote considerable space to a column early in the campaign in which Hollywood mogul David Geffen made nasty comments about Bill and Hillary Clinton to Maureen Dowd before co-hosting an Obama fundraiser. Like Dowd, the *Game Change* authors go gaga over Geffen's "world-class art" ("Rauschenbergs, de Koonings, Pollocks, Gorkys, a Jasper Johns target, a Jasper Johns flag" in the book; "a Jasper Johns flag and a matched pair of de Koonings" in her column). They describe how Geffen and Dowd, "a mischievous dyad," conspired to produce a bombshell attack on the Clintons' character from their former close friend and sometime adviser. Dowd interviewed Geffen for fifteen minutes. She then "left and wrote her column, then called Geffen and read it to him." The next night, after the fundraiser, Dowd came to dinner with the Obamas and a few Hollywood types, and Geffen read the column to Barack Obama, who presumably was amused.

The Clinton campaign took the bait. Mark Penn, who comes off only slightly better in this book than did Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs*, reacted so hysterically that he suggested releasing whatever still-under-seal presidential records might reflect unfavorably on Geffen. Campaign spokesman Howard Wolfson demanded that Obama return Geffen's money and repudiate his support. Obama quite sensibly replied, "It's not clear to me why I should be apologizing for someone else's remarks." The incident became a boon to Obama, making the Clinton campaign look panicked and incompetent. (Hillary gave Penn and Wolfson the go-ahead to go after Geffen upon being woken up by her campaign chief, Patti Solis Doyle. If there is one worthwhile lesson to be learned from this book, it is not to make big decisions when somebody's just woken you up.)

More significant, the episode demonstrates just how little a role the rules of professional journalism play in allegedly top-flight political reporting. Real reporters do not read their columns to their subjects in advance. And Penn and Wolfson knew damn well that Obama had no control over what Geffen said or did, but almost everyone covering the story treated it as if it were a sensible demand, because the phony food-fight story line was so much fun to pursue. Finally, at the end of the story, Heilemann and Halperin inform us, in the voice of God, that "Soon after, when Geffen visited New York, people in cars on Madison Avenue beeped their horns and gave the thumbs-up as he walked down the street." ■

I wonder how they fact-checked that one…

The Nation.

AMERICA'S SECRET AFGHAN PRISONS

ANAND GOPAL

Villagers and human rights officials accuse the United States military of torturing suspects in hidden detention centers.

One quiet, wintry night last year in the eastern Afghan town of Khost, a young government employee named Ismatullah simply vanished. He had last been seen in the town's bazaar with a group of friends. Family members scoured Khost's dusty streets for days. Village elders contacted Taliban commanders in the area who were wont to kidnap government workers, but they had never heard of the young man. Even the governor got involved, ordering his police to round up nettlesome criminal gangs that sometimes preyed on young bazaargoers for ransom.

But the hunt turned up nothing. Spring and summer came and went with no sign of Ismatullah. Then one day, long after the police and village elders had abandoned their search, a courier delivered a neat handwritten note on Red Cross stationery to the family. In it, Ismatullah informed them that he was in Bagram, an American prison more than 200 miles away. US forces had picked him up while he was on his way home from the bazaar, the terse letter stated, and he didn't know when he would be freed.

In the past few years Pashtun villagers in Afghanistan's rugged heartland have begun to lose faith in the American project. Many of them can point to the precise moment of this transformation, and it usually took place in the dead of night, when most of the country was fast asleep. In its attempt to stamp out the growing Taliban insurgency and Al Qaeda, the US military has been arresting suspects and sending them to one of a number of secret detention areas on military bases, often on the slightest suspicion and without the knowledge of their families. These

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